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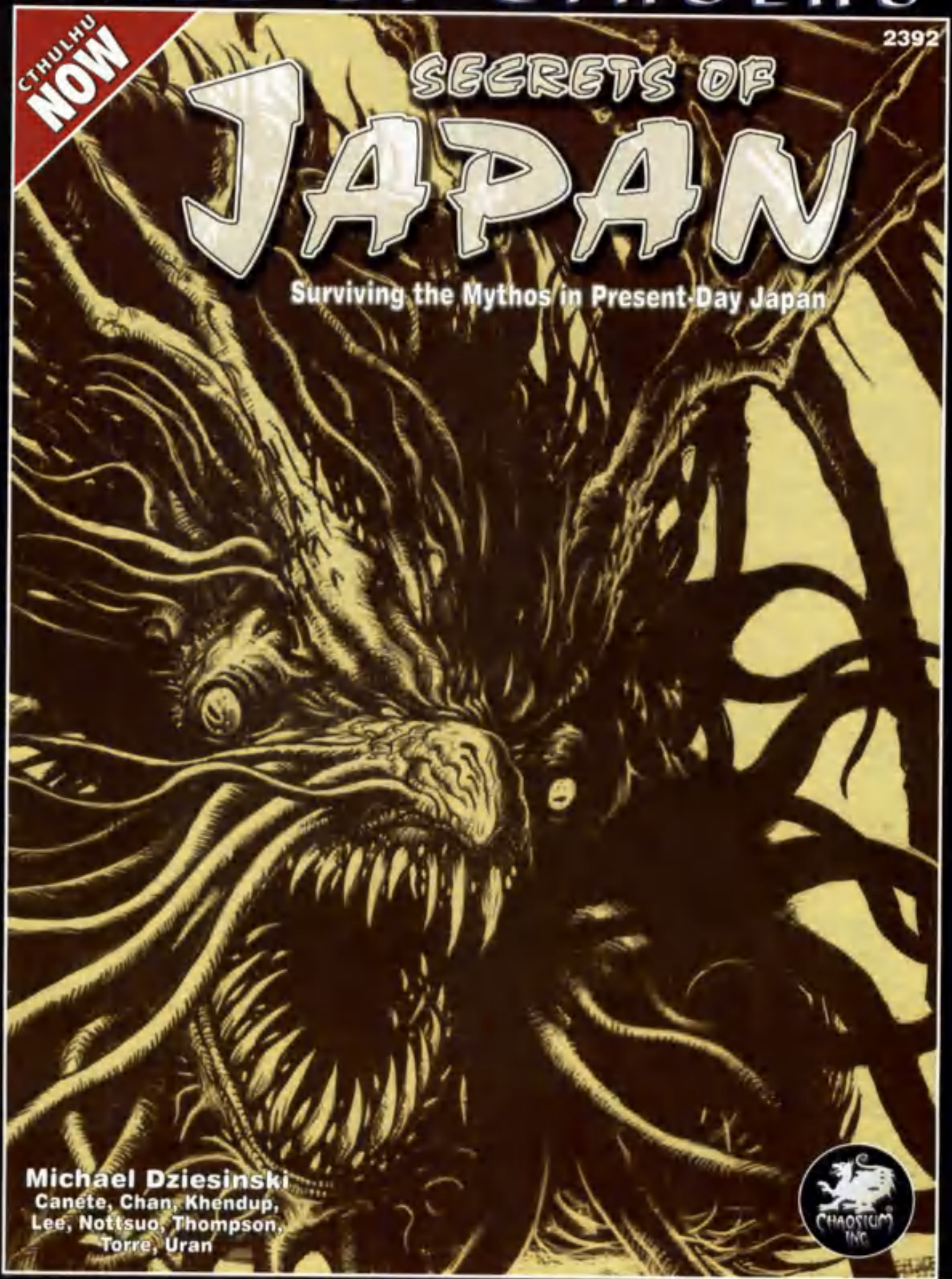

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CHAOSIUM INC.

Secrets of Japan

ROLEPLAYING IN PRESENT-DAY JAPAN

日本秘史

Hishi Nippon

そは永久に横たわる死者にあらねど
測り知れざる永劫のもとに死を超ゆるもの

So wa tokoshie ni yokotawaru shisha ni aranedo
hakari shirezaru eigou no moto ni shi wo koyuru mono.

That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die.
—Abdul Alhazred, *The Necronomicon.*

Howard Phillips Lovecraft

1890 - 1937

Cthulhu Japan

Secrets of Japan

日本秘史

Hishi Nippon

A Keeper's Guide to Cthulhu Roleplaying in Present Day Japan

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2005

30 Years of Chaos!

Dedication

To Joyce and Michael, my mother and father, for never losing faith in me. First and foremost, this book is for the both of you. And to Mac, who taught me how to drive straight. Hey J! Look what I did with my crayons!

To my younger brother and sisters Justin, Allison, and Jowanda, for letting me be the oldest. We are all special in our own way and have our own strengths. Cherish them as I cherish you.

To my editor on this book, David "Big C" Mitchell. You were always on hand to be my "second" when the need arose to disembowel my prose. Your tanto sharp eye helped make this book ready for prime time. Domo!

And of course, a warm thank you to Lynn for his continual support with *Secrets of Japan*. You gave me an opportunity for which I will always be grateful.

Most importantly, I thank you, the reader, who now holds this newest addition to the Cthulhu Mythos in your hands. There is more to come! Enjoy.

Finally, I dedicate this book to that great lady, Nippon, the Land of the Rising Sun. Japan and her people have burrowed into the deepest core of my being and wormed their way into my heart. I treasure the years I spent living in Japan and will return to her shores. Japan is a place I honestly love, and sometimes despise. She's a country both awe inspiring and baffling. I thank you, Japan, for bottomless inspiration and the great many joys you have left in my soul.

—Michael Dziesinski

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The terms B.C.E. and C.E. (before common era/common era) are used instead of B.C. and A.D. for all dates.

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The Yonaguni Monuments

THE YONAGUNI MONUMENTS

In harsh contradiction to the endless maw of night, glaring unnatural light sears the pupils like boiling steam. Eardrums are assaulted by hideous sucking noises accompanied by the staccato scraping of baked ceramics. A hapless nose begins to water, victim of the piquant aroma of pepper and boiled animal flesh. Wet hands unconsciously clutch the shoulder satchel yet tighter. The air inside clings, humid and thick with the odors of bodies impossibly huddled side by side at a well-worn wooden counter. Flesh masks gulp scalding hot broth and captive noodles, intent on chilling the slippery cargo with a ritual of squelching and slurping. Noises, emitted by mouths feeding from large gaping bowls reminiscent of crude metal troughs on a farm. I find the acids in my stomach churning at the contents of the patrons' bowls.

From the corner of my watery eye, a figure in the shadows. The far side of the room. Before I can place him, he slithers out of sight. I shake my head, freeing my senses from their prison. The corner is empty. Only white walls. White and sterile.

The noisy ramen shop is a last resort. It's the only place we have to turn to if I am to achieve my goal before the treacherous typhoon season starts. Desperation. Perhaps . . . perhaps I am acting rashly—it's frustrating to be so close to grasping my life's work and yet unable to claim its bounty. Having risked so much, lost so much . . . Lynda. Enduring the sharp jabs of culture shock is a small price to pay. Hard to believe only three weeks have passed since I set foot in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Murky blackness. The cold pressure of thousands of tons of water overhead ensures lifeless serenity. After millennia of stillness, movement. Encrusted rock ponderously shifts. Slow and steady, it scrapes, grinds. A low rumble crawls through the depths.

The Japanese bureaucracy is infuriating. I begin to wonder if they receive social training from Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. Upon a deceptively warm welcome at Tokyo University, I immediately gain audience with the head of the department. My research and expedition proposal piques the attention of staff archeologist Hiro Fuji. To my dismay, it is only the third day after my arrival that the good professor becomes indisposed with "official duties." This after my grueling fourteen-hour flight from California, and two animated discourses in his office. I can only guess that like a Noh actor, carefully rehearsed responses and smooth wooden smiles masked his true opinions. The mark of a Buddha or staff administrator, I'm sure. I am forced to deal with his minions and am quickly enlightened about a powerful Japanese weapon on the institutional battlefield: *wa*. In the interest of harmony, confrontation and conflict are avoided. It is highly virulent: I find myself patiently waiting for two weeks in a bamboo cage of my own making at visitors' housing before my frustration reaches a fever pitch. The native cuisine of sushi and rice is disagreeable. That and jet lag may account for the mild disorientation and sense of . . . displacement. Hungering for a taste of home more and more frequently, the McDonalds in central Tokyo beckons an uneasy stomach. At wits' end, I seize the initiative and charter a flight south to the remote subtropical islands of Okinawa. Putting on the guise of tourist, my wardens are firmly convinced of my confession: since I'm here anyway, why not travel and enjoy the flavor of traditional Japan? Many approving smiles and words of encouragement, no doubt believing the defeated foreigner to be giving up on his original mission. Possibly, or mere relief to be rid of the demanding and pushy American professor from Stanford.

Ancient machinery groans against stubborn inertia. Stagnant seas crackle with eldritch energy. Seams on monolithic basalt blocks crack and part. Shadowy forms dissolve as sickly green light filters, casting a glowing hue on blind creatures.

During the four-hour ordeal on a commercial DC-10 from Tokyo, the calmly polite voice of a female flight attendant chirps over the speakers:

"Kon-ban-wa. Attention ladies and gentlemen. We will be landing in twenty minutes. At our destination it is clear skies and 27 degree Celsius. Please remember to fill out your duty-free forms for gifts before landing. A 7.4 magnitude earthquake has occurred, centered fifty kilometers off the coast of Okinawa's main city of Naha at 8:04 P.M. local time. While in your seats, please keep your seat belts fastened. Smoking is allowed in the rear of the cabin. Thank you."

Astonished, I look into the faces of fellow pilgrims to the land of suntan oil and basting skin. No one is the least bit fazed by the announcement, as if it were part of a simple weather forecast. The calm acceptance of such capricious calamity stuns me. It shakes my awareness that I'm no longer home, no longer in the States.

Traveling on a business-class ticket, my seat is strategically close to the built-in Port-a-Lets the airlines claim to be washrooms. I decide to splash water on my face to drown the grogginess. Shuffling to the washroom, acting as an imaginary boundary into the synthetic luxury of first class, I open the flimsy plastic door. Before entering the claustrophobic box, a pale green glow slithers into the edge of my peripheral vision.

Thoom.

Muscles in my neck tighten like cords.
Blood is suddenly awash in adrenalin.
Thoom. Thoom.

Brain fights the body's urge of flight.
I must look. Head turns. Pupils narrow.
Thuum. Thuum. *Thuum.*

To my left, in first class, is . . .
a thing. An abomination.
Thuum. Thuum. Thuum.

Reclining in the cloth chair:
A repugnant mockery of man.
THUUM. Thuum. Thuum.

My chest tightens. I cannot move.
The seat blocks most of the horror.
Thuum. THUUM. Thuum.

On an animalistic level, I know. Not human. Tremors take hold of my limbs. Thick long neck. Serpentine head. Tongue darts.

Thuum. Thuum. Thuum. THUUM.

Sanguinely, it cranes its predatory jaw, large slitted eyes narrow, pupils focusing on me; a claw covered in glistening scales reaches, and it reaches for the stewardess standing there, and the stewardess is still, unmoving, a helpless morsel holding a small plastic cup in sacrifice, and the inhuman appendage closes, and the stewardess is rapt by a vision of horror mere inches from her face. And—

THUUM. THUUM. THUUM. THUUM.

THUUM.

Tap. Tap. A rapping strike on my spine. I involuntarily yelp. I spin, quaking with terror; my hands ready to throttle my assailter. A short Asian granny glares up at me. Daring me to strike with my venum, she taps her complimentary slipper impatiently, waiting for the washroom stall at whose open jaws I stand poised. My face goes a deathly white and my legs become limp. Only holding onto the door keeps me aright. Gouts of acid gush into my stomach as the rest of my body catches up with the gray matter atop my spinal cord. Clutching my mid-section, I gasp. The business class passengers seated immediately near the aisle look away uncomfortably, as if I have lost my mind.

I chance to peer forward again at the ophidian horror. A perplexed Japanese man in a tailored suit returns my stare. Holding a plastic cup of steaming tea, one eyebrow rises as he tries to determine what the disturbance is. Defeated by reality, my quaking legs return me to my seat, shaken and pale. My mind is fissured. Without knowing why, I reach into my satchel to see if it's still there. Fingers quickly discover it buried at the bottom of the bag. Caressing the cool round stone, the tension lessens in my body. I sigh in relief.

Eons of silt drifts are stirred, clouding now tepid water to a viscous sludge. Reluctantly, silt settles. An eerie green cast reveals a voluminous chamber. Row upon row of timeless encrusted machinery whirs. Beyond, an immense portal stands guard.

Once landed, I hurriedly cross the tarmac away from the DC-10 with no small sense of consolation. I have booked a connecting flight with a small charter company. Halfway across the asphalt, I can clearly see the rest of the passengers herded through the gates. There is no sign of the first-class passenger. Continuing my panoramic sweep, my gaze falls upon the land beyond this sparse airstrip in Naha. I see no sign of damage from the mentioned earthquake. Strange.

As I near the hangars, a fragile-looking prop plane comes into view. This must be it. As soon as I stow my luggage, the pilot is underway. Apparently he speaks no English, and with a foreigner as his only passenger tonight . . . well, he looks nervous. Not surprisingly, conversation is sparse. It does not occur to him that I might speak Japanese, but I prefer silence for now. I need to sort things out. Not that much could be said above the buzzing drone of the propellers. I peer out of the four-seater. The cold white edge of the full moon's disc just touches the horizon of the Pacific Ocean's endless black waters. I am captivated as that ancient lifeless orb is slowly engulfed by the inky depths. Occasionally, dark shapes blemish the liquid mirror. Islands. Most are uninhabited, but a smattering bear burning yellow lights. Twinkling upon the black expanse, it's a distorted reflection of the true heavens stretching above. The solitude and raw natural beauty make me nostalgic. I think of Lynda. She would have loved this place. Its almost alien beauty would surely have deserved some remark from her. "Is this the mystical Japan Lafcadio Hearn experienced at the beginning of the twentieth century?" I miss her . . . it is unfortunate I am here on business.

The plane descends, adjusting its flaps and slowing. The whine of the engine snaps me out of my reverie. In Janglish, the pilot manages to convey that it's midnight local time on Yonaguni Shima where we will land, on this, the southern-most island of Japan, only fifty miles from Taiwan. The landing strip is little more than a lane of concrete. A two-story control tower on the lonely jetty of land holds back the vast darkness. The only way I can discern the ocean in the blackness is from the rhythmic hiss of the tide as it sucks unseen volcanic beach sand into the abyss. The plane's hatch swings open. A humid wall of wind saturates my sticky hair. Looking up into the now moonless sky, my eyes are greeted by a tapestry of coldly burning jewels. Even the milky white trail of our own galaxy can be clearly distinguished in this desolate point, far from any light pollution.

In ghastly jade phosphorescence, a thousand hearts pulsate relentlessly. Timeless bodies, since before mankind's birthing breath, they have existed. Slumbering, since before humanity ruled the land; above, they have waited. Unfathomable eyes shift rhythmically beneath impassive scaled lids. Life, which defies explanation, dormant and yet . . . stirring.

As I squeeze out of the cramped four-seater, a strange looking Japanese man rushes up to greet me. Strange, that is, by Japanese standards. It's disconcerting. After two weeks of pampering in Tokyo, I have formed a certain image in my mind of how Japanese people should dress and behave. Conservative business suits in grays and blacks, neatly trimmed hair, and clean-shaven faces the norm. The man standing before me is the complete antithesis of all of my notions. Most welcoming is his warm open smile framed by a scraggly black beard. At six feet tall, his choice of attire is almost humorous, a pink t-shirt and frayed blue jeans. Topping curly hair peppered with gray is a red baseball cap with a Tokyo Giants logo.

Stepping forward with an outstretched hand, this cultural rebel introduces himself in flawless if curious English.

"Jiro Hasafumi at your most humble service. Ah, I would guess you might be wondering my credentials—I'm an archeologist attached to Tokyo University. We affectionately refer to it as 'Todai' for short."

Relieved to find at last someone who seems genuinely friendly, I likewise introduce myself as Doctor Clark H. Sharpley, Department of Ancient Languages and Myths, Stanford University.

Hasafumi leads us away from the airstrip to an artifact on wheels: a US Army issue jeep. Throwing my gear into the dusty backseat, I choose to personally carry my shoulder satchel. After ten years of research far and wide to attain my prize, I never let it stray far from my sight. Iron in the jeep's starter whines as it cranks for several torturous seconds. The battered engine rattles to life. With a sheepish grin, Hasafumi inexpertly grinds the gears until he finds first gear. The vehicle lurches forward. The dim lights of the WWII-era jeep are barely adequate. Pale yellow beams weakly illuminate the crushed limestone and shell road immediately before us, tires crackling as we snap and pulverize the bones of long dead sea creatures. Squinting, my eyes register that we are surrounded on both sides by jungle. It's a seemingly endless stretch of tropical flora. But there's something unsettling about the tangle of greenery and I can't help but shiver. Discounting the steady clatter of a pathetically worn clutch plate and popping pistons, I'm aware that we are completely enveloped in silence. No birds or bugs utter cries of life. After a half hour of silent green, Hasafumi slows to a stop. The jeep jerks forward as he misses neutral. Before us, the limestone road ends abruptly at a ten-foot tall barbed wire fence. On the rusting gate is a fading sign.

WARNING

Keep Out

Property of the United States Navy

Trespassers will be Arrested

Ancient springs creak as I shift nervously in my seat. My eyes dart to Hasafumi. The tall man in a pink shirt seems to laugh at some private joke as he cheerfully marches over to the deserted booth, salutes, and flips a switch with measured drama. A grating buzz, and the foreboding gate rolls open. Hasafumi is already hopping into the idling jeep. We drive on.

As Hasafumi coerces the jeep into the US military compound, I'm not quite sure what I imagined. It certainly wasn't the decrepit scene now surrounding the vehicle. A dozen or so decaying barracks, whitewashed as if this could mask their pathetic state. With a hideous squeal of depleted brake pads, Hasafumi brings the jeep to a stop at the largest of the steel shacks. I sigh audibly as blood returns to my ghastly white knuckles grasping the roll bar. My guess is the corrugated structure probably served as the officers' quarters at one time. Several faces briefly hover in a smudged window, including one with spectacles; just as quickly they vanish. I retrieve my baggage and we go inside.

A makeshift research lab, assembled with all the regularity of an erector set, sprawls inside the officers' mess hall. An impressive amount of mismatched equipment litters workbenches and bare concrete. In the far corner, a gas chromatograph, and chemical stripping tanks. There, a bank of four Macintosh G5 towers. One displays the latest weather from GeoSat, another sonar images of underwater landscape, the third appears to be deciphering symbols on a scanned image, and the fourth is occupied by a young man hunched over, intently at work. A tiny robot chitters as it navigates across the messy floor and beeps loudly when it hits the man's stool. The man doesn't bother to look down. On the other side of the room, broken slabs of rock are carefully spread out on a sturdy metal bench. Even from my vantage point I note that the fragments exhibit a strange greenish luminosity, despite the bright well-lit lab.

A slip of a woman perches upon a simple stool, her elegant brow embracing the eyepiece of a top-of-the-line microscope. As Hasafumi and I wander into this hub of commotion, her sparkling intelligence notices the intrusion immediately. Already, I feel her appraising my presence. Penetrating eyes confront me. At once I notice the delicate round spectacles worn on a finely boned face. Standing up, she intercepts us. Shoulder length jet-black hair drapes down upon a simple white lab coat. Despite my limited experience with Japanese, I'd judge her to be mid-twenties, but the aura of severity in her demeanor makes it difficult to be sure. A defiant air perceptibly hovers around the lady. The rigidness of her body, the tightness of her jaw; her personality slams in front of me like a rice paper door, rattling any confidence I had. Either I'm not welcome here or she treats everyone so warmly.

Noting my discomfort, Hasafumi intercedes. "This is my senior graduate assistant, Emi Ochi. Emi-san, this is Doctor Sharpley, on sabbatical from Stanford University in the United States."

Mrs. Ochi makes a conciliatory half-bow, but at no point removes her eyes from me. The hair on the back of my neck stands up. I feel as if the woman would strike me down with a katana if she could. Nonchalantly, Hasafumi turns his back to her, baring his neck, and gestures toward the kitchen. As we amble in that direction, he fills me in on the remainder of the staff. The young man buried in the monitor screen is Kenji Ohasa, a local grad student of the University of the Ryukyu. Kenji is a wiz with computers, but Hasafumi jokes that he's a bit of an *otaku* as well. Like many young men in the digital age, painfully lacking in social skills, he relates to computers better than living flesh. Hence, his robot pet. Filling out the personnel is Hasafumi's third grad student, Ishii Moritani, the dive specialist. Ishii is currently scavenging supplies off-base.

Ah, yes. This is going to be an interesting project.

Drowning, inaudible to human ears. Loose sand vibrates into orderly dunes on the chamber floor. Prehistoric algae, exposed to diluted sunlight, casts an unearthly hue on artifacts from a forgotten age. Strangled light reflects off prismatic basalt on the massive half moon portal. Impenetrable carvings criss-cross the stone threshold. Strange angles reflect the scattered light.

Scratching his beard, Hasafumi sat down with me, poured us both some green tea, and pulled the chain to a single naked light bulb dangling overhead. An incandescent halo fluttered around the battered wooden table.

With a sigh, Hasafumi sipped the hot liquid. "Sharpley-san, I must admit I have been expecting your arrival for some time. The article you published in *The Miskatonic Journal* about your research was, ah, interesting. I regret that I was unable to contact you directly, but you must understand it is a matter of face. Sometimes personal dignity, which we Japanese associate with reputation, can be as real of a hindrance as a mountain."

He paused, leaned forward and lowered his voice. "My departmental rival at Todai, Professor Fuji, is entrenched and ever has the ear of administration with his 'sensible' theories."

The tall man craned his head, straining to see the computer monitors. "What you see around you—this old Navy base, the equipment. It is all I could gather together on my meager grant. I was forced to use my own personal funds in addition. I chose this abandoned base because it has a dredged deep-water pier. I have recently leased a fishing trawler which I am converting into a research ship."

Hasafumi grabbed a folder from the bench behind us and slid it across to me. "I do have potential backers but they must see something concrete before they are willing to invest in my project. They are pragmatic types, especially Yotsubishi, but they also have a great deal of resources at their disposal. I wish I could keep this a pure research endeavor, but the realities of the day give me no choice. I understand that four Yotsubishi representatives will be here within the week to see our progress. They will report back to their superiors, recommending whether or not to invest in my research."

I was intrigued. "Mr. Hasafumi, what about Prof. Fuji? He seemed to go missing just after I arrived in Tokyo."

"Ah, that is because he is here on the other side of the island readying his team for an expedition. I have been informed that he has already crewed his research vessel, the *Todai Maru*, with Yakuza who are members of a zoku called the Dragon Lords."

I outwardly groaned.

"Sharpley-san, I must ask: Did you show him any of your findings by chance? And please—call me Jiro. We are all friends here."

"No. I only let him read my research proposal. That my study led me here to Yonaguni. Of course, it's based on many conclusions drawn from my findings . . . um, Jiro."

"Eh, well that might be just enough for the esteemed Professor Fuji to go on." Hasafumi pulled the hair on his chin and leaned back in his chair. After some time, lost in thought, he spoke again. "Sharp—Clark-san, if I may. It would appear our window of opportunity is limited, we may have to take some risky measures."

Endlessly coiled, it flexes and twists infinitely tighter.
Desiccated starched bone scrapes unyielding upon black rock.
Fetid leathery flesh ripples in stagnant air. Hunger.

●●●

Jiro had laid all his weapons on the table, hoping that I would do likewise. I felt it my turn to reveal what I could bring to the war effort. I took the satchel from my shoulder and gently laid it upon the tabletop. Untying the flap, I carefully slid out its contents. Along with a ream of research notes, some paperwork, and a few small books, was a heavy cloth wrap. I gently tugged at the edges of the cloth to unfurl it. Within, a coppery glint sparkled in the light. I opened it further, holding my breath. Here was ten years of my life. I couldn't help but have a reverential respect for it. Each time I viewed it, I felt the same excitement, the same first time giddiness. It was a key, to something immensely profound, greater than mankind had ever known. Remembering to put on my gloves, I slowly unwrapped the copper sheaves from their protective silk covers. Jiro's expression was one of wide-eyed wonder. A golden hue filled the room as the thick sheets of copper divulged flowing inscriptions in an ancient tongue. Both Emi, forgetting her aloofness for a moment, and Kenji, drawn away from his computers, wandered over to gape in awe. Polished copper reflected in their eyes.

In my possession, ten copper sheets of the *Nihonjiki*, a primordial codex to the true origins of the Japanese people. My copy, written in the seventh century and rendered in Kobū Court Japanese, an archeological treasure beyond price. And no one—from Narita's customs to my handlers at Todai—suspected that I held the authoritative source

to the foundation of the entire Japanese culture. I did not have the complete tome, no, not by far, but I did possess passages relevant to my life research. The Temple of the Ancients. These ten metal plates, the initial chapters of the volume, corresponded to folklore of the Japanese islands' most remote past. The *Nihonjiki's* records were so controversial to modern archeology, even the most forward thinking colleague would blanch at their implications; except, possibly, those standing in this room right now. The look of triumph on my face must have been obvious to those gathered.

Emi spoke to Jiro and I in Japanese, "I believe you should look at the basalt fragments our team has recovered. They were found near the ruins and they are—"

Unable to contain my excitement I blurted out in English, "What ruins?"

Muscles in Emi's jaw tightened as she smoothly continued, again in her mother tongue. "You've heard of rumored underwater pyramids off our shores? They are actually one of eight known underwater sites around the Japanese archipelago with structural anomalies. There is one small site off the coast off Naha, the capital city of Okinawa Prefecture. The largest and most impressive site is just off the southern end of this island. We call them the Yonaguni Monuments."

I was beside myself. This was it. What I had so long searched for. I could bring back . . . Lynda.

Jiro, seeing my expression, cleared his throat. "There is a central ziggurat-like structure with five irregular terraced ceremonial platforms constructed of right angled basalt blocks and walls encompassed by hexagonal stone columns. A ravine circles it along with what appears to be a road and potholes. There is much debate as to whether it is artificial or a natural rectilinear geological feature that was modified by some as yet undetermined ancient culture. The 'temple' seems to be grown or shaped from massive basalt crystals and the resultant angularity has led many mainstream geologists and archeologists to have dismissed it out of hand. Based on our sonar findings, the top of the 'pyramid' is thirty feet below sea level and the nearby ravine, which we believe to have been a river, is more than a hundred. According to our estimates, the last time the ravine was above water was over 14,000 years ago, putting the site into the realm of the Jomon peoples. They are known to have lived here on these islands 18,000 years ago."

With only slight difficulty translating such technical Japanese, I still could hardly believe what I was hearing. "Amazing! Could Japan be remnants the mythical continent of Mu? Why, this pushes Asian history further back than the Sumerians of the Western world! This pre-dates the Egyptian Pyramids near Cairo. . . ."

Undaunted by our interruptions, Emi slapped the flat of her hand on the bench. "Japanese, *please*, Sharpley-san! Based on the fact we found the stone slabs near the Yonaguni Monument site, our team believes they are from the *Ribën De Wängzhi*, a much older version of the *Nihonjiki* in classical Mandarin Chinese. We believe they contain excerpts expunged from later editions of the works, like the one of questionable origin in your possession."

With unfocused eyes, Jiro scratched the back of his head. "Clark-san, as an underwater archeologist, I have participated in excavations all over the world: Bimini in the Grand Bahamas, Alexandria off the coast of Egypt, the high altitude Lake Titicaca, the jungle sinkhole lakes of the Sinote, and many others. In all these extremely ancient sites I have seen the same underlying pattern. A unifying intelligence, if you will. All of these are regions of supposed human habitation in inaccessible and remote regions of the earth. At a time, according to our history books, that humankind still lived in caves and ate charred animal flesh. All of them having similar features and designs. It has opened my eyes to the possibility that mankind was not here first. I think these tablets could be a breakthrough to prove our history books wrong."

In unison, we walked over to the steel bench, the final resting place for the three highly fragmented slabs. Each, fully two meters in length, bore the same strange crystalline sheen I noticed when I first arrived. After several hours of comparison, I too concluded that my copper sheaves had passages missing. Almost as if the scribe of my Kobû copy of the *Nihonjiki* had censored passages too horrible to relate.

Reading their translation of the fragmented slabs a palpable tension hung in the air as the three researchers clustered around me. Jiro stared off lost in thought, and Emi patiently waited for me to reach my own conclusions; it was Kenji who blurted it out.

"Clark-san, can't you see the missing element? The difference between the two versions of the book, this symbol, for serpent? The older tome. It describes an entire race of walking serpents. A race of reptilian sorcerers who lived alongside the Japanese. It's solid evidence of a non-humanoid race, possibly the first evolved race on Earth!"

I was involuntarily chilled by this strange coincidence. The plane. That first class passenger. Other times since . . . since I found the other relic.

An unspecified dread filled the pit of my stomach. I asked to have some time to further analyze and compare the two works. They agreed and left me to ponder their discovery. There had to be more to it than that. After what I had . . . seen. There was something more to the story. I opened my notebook and began interpreting the Chinese etched upon the basalt. Upon closer inspection, I found that Jiro's team had mistranslated some of the ideograms and I could make educated guesses at partial ones on the damaged edges of the slabs. I concentrated on the sections of ideograms they indicated. Combined with my excised copy, it took an evening and part of a morning for me to piece together some of the enigma. When I finished a translation I was confident of, I called the team from their own tasks.

I let loose my conclusions. In my best Japanese, I told them what I had found. The assembled team could scarcely believe me; expressionless faces simply stared at me as if I had committed the greatest of sins. I had problems processing it myself, but there it was, in cold stone.

Kenji reacted the first. The young man's face turned green. Knocking Emi and I aside, he dashed to a thankfully dark corner of the mess hall. Unfortunately we could still hear the poor lad retching. Jiro's eyes, they held a faraway look as he solemnly treaded to the window and stared out into the endless night. I couldn't help myself; I chanced a glance at Emi. One frail hand gripped a hand whisk impossibly tight. Her hand lost all color as every drop of blood seemed squeezed away by the unyielding muscles in her palms. Following her hand up, to her wrist and then her forearm, I could discern a perceptible shake. My gaze continued to follow the contour of her trembling arm and I chanced upon her face; clenched teeth and hateful eyes narrowed to slits stared back at me. Just then, my serene detachment from the situation abruptly ended as jets of gastric fluid painfully reminded me who the master of my body was: my ulcer.

All told, we took it quite well.

Diluted sunlight falls upon the monolithic basalt portal for the first time in uncounted millennia. Shadows form in grooves carved in the coarse wall. Within the light and shadows, a shape writhes, a single immense eye, larger than a killer whale. A lens, a pupil of green crystal rendered aflame, is the centerpiece. Containing the sigil of portent, eight oval depressions cut into ancient stone to form the points of a star, an eight-pointed star

protecting an all-seeing eye. Each point, each hollow filled with a smooth crystal—save two.

We all stood, enfolded within our own worlds for a time, trying to comprehend the incomprehensible. Minds horrified at what it spoke of our world. That everything we believed was a lie. Our history was the true myth. As a foreigner, I couldn't imagine the revulsion they must be feeling at the blood that ran in their own veins. The shock of finding out your whole worldview was a cruel joke. Exposing a singular legacy that made the Japanese unique amongst all people of the world. It was this, distilled to eminent proportions in the imperial lines. Why emperors were cloistered and kept from public eye. Why the native Shinto religion had so much snake and serpent symbolism intertwined within it. Why legends of dragons were whispered throughout the world.

What I did understand was what it implied about the chronicle of the entire earth. If, in this isolated corner of the globe, history didn't follow that set forth by human historians, what did that bespeak of humanity's fate? Was this knowledge the keystone I sought? Was this, as I suspected, related to the evidence hinted at in my own theory—one I would have to verify at the ceremonial terraces of the temple?

Jiro reverentially brushed his fingertips over the carved characters. "Most modern Eastern theologians assume, rightly, that humanity is currently mired in its third age. As it has been since 1052 C.E. Honestly, I have always inferred these to be metaphysical metaphors about the spiritual development of the human race as a whole. As for the Six Realms, only Tiberan Buddhists still hold that the universe is composed of overlapping layers of realms. Esoteric Buddhists believe that people transmigrate up and down through these realms but never escape the wheel of reincarnation. . . ."

I was unable to help myself. I grabbed my notebook and returned to the broken slabs to translate as much as I was able to hear. My pencil was quickly worn to a nub as it was consumed in my ardor. My companions did not have the stomach for further revelations and emptied from the officers' shack for fresh air. As I read on, the *Rìbèn De Wénggào* filled in details, terrifying details, never mentioned in any religious text. An unbroken chain of startling real-world events foretold to occur, each marking an epoch of humanity. Painstaking explanations that the Three Ages of Man were firmly in the realm of the real. That what humans *thought* they knew about the universe would sift through a tea strainer.

It even mentioned Dharma! A pre-Buddhist work, predicting a world religion! Dharma, the cosmic truth, was both liberating and appalling. Dharma, an understanding of the universe that invoked humility for strong minds and insanity for the weak. And I understood why, for if this unspeakable truth were known and understood by the general populace, despair would seize them. For the final and Third Age, Mappo, to end, and for a new golden era to begin, a transition, a ghastly upheaval must take place. The Awakened One could not begin his work until "the blight is removed from the land," a sickening euphemism for cleansing life from the earth. When all Six Realms of Desire merged into one, the Awakened One would "scour the affliction from the soil." This being's awakening would cause a jarring and sudden shift of the earth's poles, wrenching the globe from its axis. Mile high tidal waves, mega-quakes, volcanoes. The billions of humanity would die in an instant. And it all would start with a harbinger. Here. In Okinawa.

If we could only get to the Yonaguni underwater ruins. . . .

Six smooth crystals of extraterrestrial composition seethe with white-hot power. The grand sigil, limned by intermingling yellow and blue energies, throbs to life. Alien desire strains against the barrier, crystalline elliptical, drawing an incomplete star, pulsate ever brighter. Seawater in the chamber sublimates, instantaneously to vapor. Inhuman thoughts awaken. An ageless consciousness reaches out incorporeal tendrils. Life. Life swells. She infests every corner of the earth above. How long? Is it time? Milky orbs twitch. Beyond the gate, a kraken awaits with an age-old, unutterable craving.

Jiro's grad student, Ishii, returns with supplies and news. The epicenter of the previous evening's earthquake was very close to the underwater ruin site. Our team agrees that it has undoubtedly clouded and stirred the ocean bed into a muddy mess that could take days to settle. And who knows what structures have shifted? A new wrinkle. And yet more snags, as within one week, we will also be hemmed in by our new backers, pressed to share all our discoveries. Or undercut altogether by Jiro's rival, Professor Fuji, making it first to the underwater site. All involved know that typhoon season is only weeks away and typhoons, even this early in the year, are not unheard of.

Our team has an adequate enough vessel to get us to the dive coordinates—a hastily converted fishing trawler. Sorely lacking is a captain, someone who knows the waterways surrounding Okinawa. So here I am, in this ramen noodle hut on Yonaguni Shima, looking for a brave soul to skipper our motley crew to the dive target.

Standing in the ramen shop's doorway, I can't help but eye the characters ingesting a bewildering array of slippery noodles. Several cruel looking individuals glare back at me. No, this is not the Japan I expected. Several fishermen, seeing my uneasiness, smile. To my shock, their mouths are harbor to chains of missing front teeth or row after row of rotten stumps. Of the haggard assemblage of men under this roof, most, if not all, have skin of leathery hide from years of work under a harsh subtropical sun.

Why am I even here? Oh yes, Jiro convinced me that we'd have a better chance at recruiting a captain if I asked . . . being a foreigner and all. Enough of an alien oddity, my curious presence might sway a skipper who might not be otherwise interested. I quickly find out why. Most patrons, upon hearing the general direction in which I want to take a ship, simply laugh. Hearty, open laughs. One gaunt sailor, upon hearing my goal, announces loudly to all within earshot that no one, no one in their right mind, that is, ventures into those haunted waters. Several voices mumble in agreement.

After numerous futile inquiries and many misunderstandings because of the thick provincial dialect, I manage to find a man, Kenta and his son, Kuma, who agree to pilot our team. They will meet us at the old Navy pier tomorrow morning.

The next sunrise, our team loads up the jeep with the first of many cargoes to the loading dock. From a distance, the waters appear choppy as Jiro and I reach the converted trawler berthed there. At first sight, I'm taken aback. Patches of chunky whitewash ineffectually coat the hull while here and there defiant colonies of rust burst through the lines. Two massive red winch cranes jut out of the rear of the engine room at a forty-five degree angle, evoking the imagery of a small child's toy boat. A high flat deck mushrooms across the entire stern of the vessel—once the resting place of netting, now of a horrid stench—the reek and putrid aroma of a thousand offerings wrenched from the bounty of the sea. The trawler appears passably sea-worthy. That is, until Jiro cranks over her engines. A convoluted mass of metal, coated with a slippery hide of oil and grease, belches black gouts of smoke . . . and dies. The panels lining the engine room rattle as the pistons pop and sputter, returning to an inanimate state.

The low bellow of an air horn causes us to cease our efforts at resurrection and go on deck. Two grease-smeared hosts greet the small aluminum boat that motors up to the old Navy pier. As promised, Captain Kenta arrives with his son Kunio, but also a cousin. There is some haggling about price. Kenta turns out to be quite shrewd and finagles a nice deal for all three of his party. It struck me the day before when I first met the captain—there is something odd about the man's appearance. Not only that, but the way the other Japanese in the ramen shop behaved toward them. Leading my new friend to the front of the ship, I tactfully raise the issue with Jiro who in turn becomes an uncomfortable shade of red.

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Jiro's eyes dart around for eavesdroppers, his voice dropping to conspiratorial whisper. "Clark-san, these men you have hired. They are aboriginal peoples. We call them Ainu."

"But I thought the Japanese were native to these islands."

Jiro loosens his collar. "Yes, we are, but the Ainu were here first. They are the indigenous people to the Japanese archipelago. Over the centuries they have been pushed further and further north as our culture flourished. Today, only 100,000 are left, relegated to sub-arctic Hokkaido, the northernmost island. Why these men are living in Okinawa is a mystery to me."

"Um, so why are you acting so peculiar?"

"I am ashamed at my countrymen's treatment of the Ainu. It is a delicate subject among us Japanese."

I decide to let the issue drop. Without another word, I grab my effects and walk down into the gloom of the cargo hold. Stagnant air lingers below decks. I click the heavily over-lacquered wall switch to illuminate the cramped hallway. Boxes of equipment are strewn down the corridor; I leap and pirouette around the debris to find suitable quarters. Here we are, preparing to get under way to explore my life's work. I'm excited, but a sense of dread claws for purchase beneath a calm surface. The quiet before the ensuing terror of the storm. What am I overlooking? The first order of business is to get cleaned up. It wouldn't do to handle my research papers covered in grime. I turn on the tap. Pipes moan and shudder in resistance. For a long moment, no water spills forth. Then, a viscous yellow sludge vomits into the washbasin. There is an audible pop when clear transparent liquid pushes its sickly cousin through and washes the effluvia down the drain. I resolve to drink bottled water.

As I clean up, rattles and clangs echo through the hold as the engine defibrillates and once again chokes to a halt. There is a rat-a-tat tempo of frustrated Japanese voices shouting at one another. I'm opening my satchel when the beast of an engine once again churns to life and manages to stay running. A steady rattle lulls to a thrumming vibration as I sit down. For a moment, I get the sense of motion and look out my porthole, which for now, shows a crustacean-filled panorama under the pier. Glowing red dots float in the shadowy waters. The unexpected lurch of the ship pulls away my attention. The metal deck above me screeches like fingers on chalkboard. There is a dull pounding. I can almost feel the metal compartments of the hull rend as they strain against forces they were never meant to endure. A high-pitched grinding claws its way from the front of the ship towards me like a malign predator. More shouting. A loud thump and the ship jerks as my view of the dock in the round porthole slowly shrinks. The strange lights are gone. We are on our way. I make a note to apologize to Jiro—not about anything in particular, but it does seem to ease tension in this society.

Rap. Rap. A frayed Jiro knocks on my cabin door. Painted hinges creak as I grant him egress. "Ah, Clark-san, you are well I trust? We'll be at the site in less than two hours. Because of the earthquake, a new sonar scan will be necessary to account for sediment shifts. Ishii-san feels that the fast currents should clear away any silt quite quickly. I'll see you top side at lunchtime. We'll have some tea, yes?"

We reach the site coordinates around noon. There is little to behold above water except green waves. On the right side of the ship, I notice a gash of exposed steel lacerating the starboard bow of the ship. The vessel's painted call numbers are scraped bare, only "-maru" remains of the craft's name. I idly wonder how the mooring fared in the battle with the dock. Ishii is hunched over next to me on the deck checking pressure gauges and hoses for the dive equipment. I notice Emi circumscribing the deck with a clipboard and pen. She's rechecking my translation of the tablet. She glares at me and continues pacing. Kenji pokes his head out from the control room long enough to inform our informally assembled team that the trawler must make several slow spiraling sweeps to methodically map the area properly. "Preliminary data looks exciting, but precision is important. This may take most of the day, folks."

Disappointed at the news, I descend back down into the bowels of the hold. I decide to rest. Rusted springs protest as I attempt to get comfortable in my futon.

Nothingness. I open my eyes. I know this place. The succulent aroma of garlic and frying chicken fills the living room. Occasional hissing and scraping noises emanate from the white, brightly lit kitchen. There she stands, with a sly smile, making my favorite dish. I hurry over to embrace her, to enfold her in my arms. Lynda. She laughs, puzzled at my sudden affections. I can feel her warmth against my body as the radio on the table outside softly plays "Take the 'A' Train." We sway in an impromptu dance as she continues to try and stir the oriental concoction. She turns to me and puts her hand on my beard as I dreamily gaze through the balcony window. Sunset, on the Manhattan skyline. The end of a warm summer day.

Something feels wrong. A sinister shadow swiftly eclipses skyscrapers and is gone. The radio sputters, broadcasting chaotic static. Fragments of song, then an obscene repetitive click-whir droning upon the speakers. The air—still, stagnant. I let go of Lynda, squeeze her hand reassuringly and walk over to the balcony to adjust the radio dial. I shiver as the ambient temperature plunges in the pace of a single step. Almost inaudible, a soft chanting reaches my ears, carried upon the intolerable stillness. Om ryûjin mappo hum. *The sky demands my attention. I am transfixed with dread trepidation. Crimson clouds, pregnant with fury, billow to defile a once pure sky in seconds. The chanting, deeper, yet no louder than a vulgar whisper, resonates within my breast and the walls alike.* OM RYÛJIN MAPPO HUM. *Eyes fill with tears, but are unable to wrench away from promised anguish as a sharp silhouette descends upon my face and the cityscape. Lynda detects my lifeless stance and cries my name; it is suffocated by the unholy chanting, blood pounds through my skull, my heart a drumbeat. Then, the hideous terror, it burrows into my brain, rending the soft pulpy walls of reason. I see—*

Shouts. Hands shuddering, I rub my brows stiffly in an effort to shake off my grogginess. RATATATATATATAT. Dozens of thunderous pings ring on the outer hull. I sit bolt upright in bed as a stitch of dimples threads across the steel near the porthole. More shouts. In the tiny circular window, I can only discern shimmering red pinpricks of light adrift in a pitch-black sea.

Whipping my coat on, I sprint down the corridor. Emerging from the mouth of the hold, I am momentarily stunned by intense white

light. I drop to a crouch just inside the doorway, shielding my eyes as best as possible. A sweeping halogen search beam betrays my position, coming to rest upon our control deck. Angry commands in rapid Cantonese emanate from the light source. Abruptly, our trawler's engines spit and rumble into a roar as my entire world tumbles away. I pitch backward as distant gouts of orange flame spew at my previous position.

Full throttle, the trawler twists in a hurried arc to confront our attackers. I take the reprieve to scuttle on deck and into the bridge above. Inside, I nod to Kenji and Ishii, already there. Both look frightened.

Flecks of spittle erupt from Captain Kenta as he bellows one command after another in Japanese. Our surprised assailants desperately restart their vessel after mistaking us for easy prey. The gunman angrily discharges random bursts from his weapon. A second later, the pilot room window splinters into two circular spider webs. Fresh blood splatters on my coat as the captain's son, Kumu, sags over the navigation console. Ishii manages to catch the poor lad before Kumu slumps to the floor with bone-jarring finality. I help my frightened young friend gently ease Kumu to the deck. Pallid shock paints Kumu's face. Coughing, in the boy's mouth blooms a crimson rose. As his eyes go glassy, I feel the captain at my back, undoubtedly witnessing the scene.

As I stand, I notice Kenta clutching his left arm, the captain's yellow shirt darkening with a rapidly budding stain. Gritting teeth, the Ainu captain's face inflames with rage, a curse upon his lips. "Pirates!" Elbowing aside his cousin at the helm, Kenta jams our engines to full ahead. Guessing the target of our mad charge, I storm forward to halt the maniacal deed only to be restrained by his cousin. We all know Kenta's aim. Only a few heartbeats pass before an immense impact hurls all into flight.

The trawler's lights feebly flicker as the generator's breakers trip and it struggles to life. Only a stone's throw away is the deck of a Taiwanese ship. Stunned bandits scramble to their feet. A number frantically cling to mangled rails on the deck edge while many more tread in the moonless waves on this cold night. To our misfortune, they rapidly recover from the initial shock of our ram. The captain of the now scattered crew of cutthroats becomes obvious, as a man stands and begins shouting at us crazily, his arms gesticulating. Striding toward the spotlight on deck, the bloodthirsty leader violently struggles to free it and a gun turret from a wreckage of ropes and cables. Unsuccessful, he barks orders in Cantonese for aid. Sparks sporadically leap across the ruptured deck of the Chinese vessel.

Captain Kenta is still upright, managing to keep grip on a pilot's wheel now slick with his own blood. The childless man throttles the engine levers into full reverse. Piercing pain. I clap my hands over stinging ears as the shrill screeching of rending metal shatters the night. Iron beams and steel plates spark as rivets snap. A symphony of screaming men accompanies the decoupling of the two intertwined metal beasts.

There is an intense vibration at my feet as the floor plates of the control deck shudder and one of the trawler's two hoists strains against the forced parting. Tangled in ropes, the other end of the hoist looks to be firmly secured to the Taiwanese ship's mooring post by men still tying knots on our attacker's deck. With a horrendous groan, the hoist's fifty-foot structure breaks free of its welds, sliding off the trawler's deck into the unseen depths. There is the panicked shriek of men as they are pulled overboard with the new anchor.

My attention is drawn to the seas. I notice that no one, with the exception of new men pulled overboard, still swims above water. Bewildered by this development, it is only the briefest of seconds before one of the newly immersed victims squeals as he is powerfully tugged under the surface. I didn't know sharks patrol these waters.

The trawler finally pulls free from the collision, electric power on the ship flickers on only to cut out again. Our vessel's engines echo with a jagged metallic hammering. Captain Kenta, still reversing the ship, slows to a stop while instructing his cousin to the engine room.

A goodly distance now, we can survey the damaged pirate ship. Listing, it's already tilted thirty or so degrees. Strange squat shadows creep up the Taiwanese ship's scarred hull from the seas below. As the ship sinks, any definition between where the crippled hull ends and the water's surface begins is difficult to determine. There, someone moving . . . no, not someone . . . ; *something* organic in quality. It's too dark to tell what it might be. There are those dim red lights as well. *Now*, a number of distinct "things" have managed to crawl onto the main deck of the helpless ship. The surviving pirate crew is too panicked trying to inflate life rafts to yet notice this new threat. From this distance, the forms are no bigger than tadpoles, half the size of the remote pirate crew. Ah, I can clearly see they are wearing green—people? No . . . wait. Dozens, swarming upon the sinking ship—from all directions.

Unable to stop gawking at the astonishing spectacle, I absentmindedly flail at anyone behind me. Kenji and Ishii flank my shoulders to see what the problem is. The audience grows larger as the first man on the doomed vessel hoarsely howls. Just as quickly, his breath is cut short as the horde savagely falls upon him. Yet more pudgy green shapes throng to other stunned sailors. Pairs of red lights, perfectly spaced twins hover on the doomed ship. Dozens upon dozens leer in our direction. Looking . . . at . . . us. My blood runs cold. Looking at us. Nausea strangles the bile from my throat. They can't exist. Impossible. My reason whimpers. What *are* these abominations?

In unison, both grad students utter a single word as if a powerful incantation—"Kappa!" The three of us urgently encourage Captain Kenta to start our engines. Dozens, no . . . hundreds of green humanoid forms smother the dying ship, its deck is now slanted fifty degrees. It will sink soon. I breathe a sigh of relief when the captain coaxes the hobbled engines long enough to limp away from the area.

The chaotic events of the last few minutes are too much for me. Leaning against the engine room I peer up at the countless stars. Suddenly I feel insignificant and very, very small. In a stupor, my legs give way as I droop to the floor. I lose the contents of my stomach on my pants. Numb, It is several long minutes before I notice. It's many more when I am no longer too weak to stand, that I do something about it.

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It is only two hours later that a much welcome dawn arrives. Our ship, no longer graced by a uniform coat of whitewash, *seems* structurally sound. Her bilge pumps work overtime. There's something to be said for sturdy construction.

There. On the horizon, a column of smoke.

Nervously I glance from the smoke to our captain. Before I can ask, the captain notices my jitteriness and anticipates my query. Kenta assures us all that we are far from the site of the pirate attack. Lines of pain stretch the man's leathery features taut. The man grieves for his son, but the dedication to his duty is heroic. Several times, when he addresses us, his voice cracks but he manages to maintain his composure.

The pillar of oily smoke grows in size until the trawler arrives a scant thirty minutes later at its source. Our entire complement exchanges surprised looks. It's a big vessel. In fact, it's easily half again the size of our ship. By its visible equipment, I take the wounded craft

to be a multi-million dollar research vessel. Dragging along painfully slowly, it's a little too low in the water as well. Stifling a smug grin is a true effort when I note the ship's name, the *Todai Maru*. That changes when I notice on its once pristine decks a dozen long bundles swathed in white cloth. Dominating the research ship's aft deck is a daisy yellow submersible, *Todai-Chan*.

Our Ainu captain signals the lumbering vessel, which in turn blows its horn to allow us to pull alongside. As we get nearer, I notice bullet holes riddling the white hulk's upper decks. Captain Kenta notices this too. "Maybe Teflon. Chinese elite issue."

An ugly black flower of twisted metal blooms in the engine room: it looks to be the handiwork of some type of missile. My anxious look catches the captain's eye as he casually inspects the damage. "It's not uncommon for Chinese troops to go into business for themselves in these parts, just not usually this deep in Japanese territory."

A constant fountain of water gushes from anchor holes at the fore of the heavily damaged *Todai Maru*. Her bilge pumps are working at one hundred percent capacity to save the ship.

A Japanese man emerges from below decks. Half of his head is swathed in a tangle of surgical bandages, including his left eye. His glasses clumsily fit over the white mass, leaving one lens a useless orphan. A scowl disfigures the portion of his face still free of wrappings. Catching sight of our assembled group on the trawler, his rescuers, the bandaged man's whole demeanor transforms. He waves excitedly to our ship, and greets us with a disarming smile. It's almost as if our appearance is an everyday event and he is welcoming us into a hut for a leisurely tea ceremony. We are much too far away still to hear what he is shouting about over the drone of the trawler's engines. Our ship approaches anyway, to rescue his team.

As we drift closer to the ship, more individuals emerge topside on the *Todai Maru*'s main deck. Moving with determined purpose, they flank the madly waving one-eyed man. They do not smile. Some are wounded; one even has an arm in a sling, but still looks extremely capable. Dressed in black, a complement of sword scabbards are jammed in the belts of the new arrivals. One or two have topknots. An extremely dangerous air hangs about them. They wait for us.

The captain's cousin throws roped tires on the side of the trawler. Just before we pull aside, I realize who the bandaged man is: it's Professor Fuji, the man of false smiles and ghastly presence at Todai. I am not happy. Bemused maybe, but definitely not pleased. The deck of the *Todai Maru* is a full two feet lower than the trawler. I quickly step over to the captain's cousin and whisper in Tokyo Dialect that it might be a good idea to leave the mooring lines between the ships loose. He nods in agreement.

The group led by Professor Fuji easily hops across the gap of the vessels and climbs up to the trawler's deck plates. Jiro and the rest of our team loiter around. His face a stern mask, nonetheless, I can tell that Jiro shares my sentiments about this development. Not as skilled as Jiro, my countenance registers disgust. Representing his group, Professor Fuji begins the customary greetings all Japanese do upon first meeting. I am nearest to him. The professor reaches out to shake my hand before backing away visibly shaken and embarrassed.

After strained bows, both groups get down to the meat of the matter. The *Todai Maru* has lost most of her crew and research team. With an approving nod by Jiro, grad student Ishii apprises the trawler's remaining crew of our team's status. As I feared, Ishii confirms that the events of the last six hours make mapping of the sea bed impossible. Most of our equipment, already held together with gum and spit, has been damaged beyond repair by the addition of lead to its inner workings. Beyond comprehension to me (but, as I'm learning, true to form for the Japanese), the two teams agree to pool resources.

After the hasty dialogue, the six silent dangerous ones briskly begin to load supplies onto the trawler. I help by hooking our remaining crane onto the robotic submersible and swinging it over to our deck. In the forty minutes it takes us, several of the men make numerous rapid trips into the bowels of the waterlogged *Todai Maru*—and return soaked to their armpits. Only fifteen minutes after the trawler begins to steadily chatter away, billions of yen of equipment exits under the waves. As the radar mast disappears from view, there is a large slurch, followed by a disgusting wet sucking noise. Foaming bubbles mark the watery burial spot for several minutes before the bubbles too fade from view.

I am the only one still topside to see off the vessel. I wish I had a bottle of champagne to throw overboard from the deserted deck. I go down the stairs into the hold and hear loud voices. There is a heated discussion in my friend's room. Glancing in, Jiro, Professor Fuji, and Emi stand around a metal table bolted to the floor. I have to push past a surly man and woman stationed at the doorway to get inside the quarters. As I brush past, I can't help but notice the knotted cords of muscles he conceals beneath a loose fitting black shirt.

In the room, I now understand why Jiro conceded to deal so quickly with Professor Fuji. On the table, detailed maps and sonar charts of the Yonaguni underwater ruins taken only hours before, and much altered from the pre-earthquake layout. It's a power struggle; Professor Fuji, as senior-most researcher in the group, asserts himself to be team leader and begins giving orders. Jiro ignores the declaration and continues planning the dive. I stay long enough to gather it has at least been agreed upon that we will spend the night preparing for a dive and hit the waves first thing in the morning.

Yes, this dive tomorrow is going to be interesting. . . . Exhausted, I stumble to my quarters and sagely lock the door behind me. I fall asleep within minutes of hitting the futon.

. . . Hideous horror burrows into my brain, rending reason. I see death. The epicenter of my terror. Lynda cries out my name. My mind silently screams. This cannot be. Undulating inexorably through crimson cloudbanks far upon the horizon, it is impossibly enormous. With serpentine fluidity, it dwarfs the Empire State Building as it passes by and then through the skyscraper. A silent explosion of glass erupts outward, too far to be heard from my vantage point.

At this immense distance, I am able to put a shape to my fear, for it masks itself in the body of a mythical dragon of ancient lore. Unspeakably gargantuan, massive coils of a serpentine body descend from their opaque sanctuary of blistering cloud. Only slices of the entity are perceptible at any one time from within its scarlet cloak of clouds. Sweeping loops and arches of reptilian carcass wind around the buildings of Manhattan like a malignant cosmic string. I tremble, wits scarcely able to seize the enormity of this being.

Eardrums throb. Chanting saturates the air, ingesting all sound. OM RYŪJIN MAPPO HUM!

I realize too late that my location offers no safety. The behemoth's head slices out of the clouds. It takes only seconds for it to reach this side of the river. Inside, a little voice whimpers. I do not want to see any more. I want to shut it all out. Unable to bear the onslaught, I am a helpless witness, a prisoner of my own body, bolted to the balcony. A rotten pus-filled orb the size of a water tank leers at me with malice. The serrated shell halts movement. Innumerable chunks of body, hidden but connected into one indescribable whole, continue to undulate and flow across the cityscape. The milky sphere appraises me with unconcealed malevolence, its dead pupil nested in the hollow socket of a desiccated

dragon's head. This close, the corpulent scales of its body appear more like a translucent mane or . . . tendrils.

I am unable to endure the scrutiny of the grinning dragon beast. The endless body is coated with prismatic scales. A flowing white pelt sprouts at the junctures of each diamond shaped scale. I cling to the small details of perceived reality. My detachment keeps me grounded. The entity's tufts and locks move in a strangely disturbing manner. They oscillate as if blown by the wind, but in air deathly still. Then I witness—no. . . . It's ghastly!

Dark writhing figures struggle within each of the translucent "hairs" that line the endless length of the living corpse. All are human, or were. They struggle, scream, plead within clear digestive sacs on the monster's skin. Behind me, an insane symphony, a bloodcurdling shriek echoes the demon's. I spin around, a gigantic snake like pseudopod phases through the wall, a solid wall . . . to—to engulf . . . Lynda! Futilely, she fights as a white oozing digestive slime coats her body, draws her in. My love's mouth opens in a perfect scream only to be filled with the slippery liquid. Helpless to act, my wife dies, absorbed through the membrane of the lucent filament. Sinister purpose fulfilled, it withdraws from the room. A red slick of blood coats the wall.

The chanting, it rattles the windows as my ears begin to bleed. Unstoppable calamity rears back its corpse-head, bellowing a piercing wail. As if released by some invisible force, I fall to my hands and knees sobbing at this wicked orgy of destruction. OM RYŪJIN MAI'PO HUM, *The cries of a million voices merge with agonizing chanting. The floor beneath me cracks.* OM RYŪJIN MAPPO HUM. *Blood coats my hands, Lynda's blood mingled with my own. I am deaf yet the relentless chant continues.* OM RYŪJIN MAPPO HUM, *Buildings shear and crumble.* OM RYŪJIN MAPPO HUM. OM RYŪJIN MAPPO HUM.

I sit bolt upright screaming in babbling, incoherent terror. I am shaking and drenched in sweat. Tears well up in my eyes. I stumble out to the hall and retch in the sink. My stomach smolders and my throat burns with bile.

Daybreak. I look into the mirror at sallow, haunted eyes. I can't tolerate this cramped stale coffin. I need fresh ocean air. Topside, welcome sunlight bathes and warms my skin. Our trawler is anchored over the ruin site. The water is dark and coppery, most likely from the large basalt pyramids directly below. The deck of the trawler is abuzz with activity. Helping the preparations takes my mind off my vision of terror. Kenji and Ishii are pulling out dive gear. Both look pale and restless. Kenji is visibly green. Jiro and Emi are in a discussion on the far side of the submersible. Jiro looks tired as well. Emi carries the usual rigid gait but looks otherwise well rested. A feverish thought crosses my mind: Was I the only one who had the dream?

The first team of four divers sits on the deck and begins to peel off clothing. I will go with the second team. I scrabble for a mikan orange from my satchel and accidentally pull out the artifact. The jade stone glows in the morning sun. A comma shaped carving covers half of it; the other side, a smooth surface. I can only liken it to a Yin-Yang symbol. My prize has caught someone else's attention as well. One of Fuji's grim men sits on the deck. He cocks his head slightly and raises an eyebrow at the priceless treasure cradled in my palm. I smoothly slide it back in my satchel and pull out the intended orange. Peeling back the fruit's skin with a friendly smile, I offer a slice, winking at him in a gesture calculated to put a normally reserved Japanese off guard. Instead, he sneers at me, unmoving. A tough guy.

As part of the first dive team, he strips off his socks. It's when he removes his jacket and shirt that it's my turn to be taken off guard. An intricate and beautiful tattoo of a dancing red-skinned oni fiend

swings a club at a stylized blue dragon, locked in mortal combat on the wiry man's flesh. As his two companions shed outer clothing, they too are transformed, the man and woman both covered head to toe in body markings of excruciating detail. His markings seem to be a kappa drowning a man, but my gaze is instantly drawn to the woman. The image of a skeletal dragon embraces the back of the woman's shapely figure. It stares at me with dead orbs. Something . . . is familiar about it, but what? Abruptly, my stomach roars, echoing across the deck. Several divers stop to stare at me. Surprised, I turn away. I'm suddenly very busy checking my dive suit. I fumble with the voice-activated radio in my mask until everyone seems to lose interest. But now, an uneasiness stirs within, the thought of descending into murky waters protected only by plastic and metal. . . . I feel queasy.

Nervous, I make eye contact with Ishii, who grins and shrugs faintly. The first team will accompany the unmanned submersible, *Todai-Chan*, for initial scouting. Everyone except the Ainu captain and his cousin will form the second team. He insists, understandably, that he needs time alone to mourn and perform the ceremony of passing. I know that feeling all too well.

As tough as he might be, I notice that my Yakuza friend kisses a shrine charm on his neck before he drops into the water. We lower the yellow robot into the sea slowly as the six divers bobble on the waves waiting. They soon descend beyond sight. Professor Fuji is now on deck; his body posture looks as if he is about to begin barking orders to us. Observing that the ranks of his enforcers are halved, his demeanor changes. Fuji sits down to suit up. I let a laugh escape; his eyes nervously dart up at me only for a second through steamed glasses before he takes them off. I sit down on the railing and slip the jade stone into my diving suit's pouch without knowing why.

It is our turn. The last vision of the surface world I see through my mask is the worried face of Captain Kenta. The sea is surprisingly warm though, as we feared, the visibility is low. Emi and Kenji, clad in wetsuits, flank me. Behind our trio, a tattooed diver trails uncomfortably close fondling a wakizashi short sword. Jiro and Fuji are well protected by a female Yakuza bodyguard. Armed with a tanto dagger, she scans the water on the look out for sharks or something less mundane. As the murky warmth of this salty womb embraces me, deep inside I know. I know that I am breaching the threshold. Where I go from here, there can be no returning to the life I once cherished.

In minutes, my plastic flippers tread atop the bewildering angles of the sunken temple. Electric excitement ripples through my legs when I touch down. I look up; we are less than thirty feet below the prow of the trawler. I join the assembled team on a terrace thickly encrusted with marine life. With sharp gestures, Ishii signals our teams down the ziggurat. I have just enough time to snap my belt clip into the harness linking members of the second team together. *Todai-Chan* has already ventured ahead of the human divers. Murky depths swallow our view of the robot. Only the taut finger of a cable lifeline points to any yellow craft below.

Our goal is the artificial trench at the base of the ancient underwater edifice. Like dwarfed children on the stairs of a giant, we alternately hop and sink deeper into the gloom. After two plunges, the water takes on a brackish cast. Another descent and the sun's feeble light is smothered. The *Todai-Chan*'s power conduit becomes my lifeline, proof that the world above indeed exists.

Another plummet down the basalt staircase. A diffuse greenish glow clings to the stones below. Unexpected illumination reveals the next several terraces and evoke in me ominous depths of despair. The intensity of the radiance swells as we go deeper. I'm mystified. I don't know enough about ocean phenomena. Is it algae or something scientifically explainable? The silt suspended in the water worsens. I can hardly see my own limbs, let alone my companions'. Hesitation grips me. The Yakuza tugging the harness prods me ever downward. I want, I need, Lynda back, but . . . am I willing to risk a watery abyss to retrieve her?

Sea bed, but I'm scarcely aware that legs support me. The source of the abnormal illumination is now apparent, a glowing olive portal gapes before me. Beckoning. Trepidation makes me the last of our group to bear witness. The handiwork of the earthquake: hundred-ton blocks are strewn haphazardly askew, the abandoned toys of a monstrous child. A burrow, torn open by the quake, tunnels into the innards of the temple. *Todai-Chan* rests nearby on the sandy seabed. Too large to enter. We will have to leave our remote eyes behind. We enter as one. Claustrophobic at first, the passage gradually winds deeper even as it widens.

The end of the fiendish rabbit hole is beyond the wildest of imaginings. Beyond anything I ever conjectured in years of feverish study of dusty tomes and obscure artifacts. Sprawling in all directions for hundreds of yards, a dry cavernous cavity awash in a now familiar green radiance. Row upon row of oval capsules line the slippery floor of the chamber in an orderly manner. The casket-shaped stone pods dwarf the size of any human grave. A macabre idea chills me to the bone. An ancient crypt? But for who . . . or, more disturbing, what?

Two of Fuji's bodyguards make a fatal blunder. Seeing the dry chamber, they mistakenly remove their combined mask and respirator apparatus. Within seconds, the men wilt to the ground, clutching throats and withered lungs. The air, crackling with static electricity, also is toxic. There is nothing we can do for them. By the time Kenji can put their breathers back on for them, they are dead. The remainder of our crew wisely keep their tanks on, but doff flippers and belts. It leaves me feeling all the more vulnerable to the alien quality that saturates this sanctuary of death. The primal part of my brain tells me to leave this place, to seek the sunny skies above.

Kenji and I inspect one of the closer capsules, others journey to the far side of the immense chamber to examine a strange light. Ajar, the pod we approach has a transparent lid. Glass? Crystal? What ancient culture used this? It is a container of some sort, but vacant. I go to the next pod; neurons refuse to process light reaching the rods and cones in my optic nerves. It takes several long seconds before cognizance registers. Unmoving, there it is—what I saw on the plane, what has been haunting me for months, framed in this stone box. Still, lifeless, a humanoid serpent creature, bizarrely adorned in woven gold finery and gemstones, and in the monster's claws . . . a scepter? Is this some alien burial ground? The evolved children of the dinosaurs? Stubborn neurons flash like a thunderclap, it strikes me—the *Nihonjiki*.

The radio crackles with a startled cry followed by a loud thump. Kenji! I scramble back to the first pod to find my friend trapped within, frantically pounding, his struggles cloud the crystal cover. The Yakuza man in our team sees the predicament and comes to help me open the lid. As we grab the edge to pry it open, I am the more fortunate of us. Jolts of energy arc from the capsule, hurling me back over ten feet. Conditioned muscles tighten a final time as the athletic man's wetsuit smolders. Cerulean bolts of energy crawl across his face, arcing teeth and eyes in exquisite pain. Bruised and battered I gain control of my feet, but the gangster drops to the floor convulsing. Dumbfounded, I am unable to save the man.

Slim hope surfaces. Perhaps I can at least rescue my trapped friend. Limping over to the captive Kenji, to my dismay he no longer struggles. I numbly bear witness to yet another scene in which I am only an impotent, ghoulish tourist. A peculiar orange haze fills the pod. Like a kettledrum, Kenji's skin swiftly stretches tight over his body, sinew and bone framing the fleshy parchment that once housed a living man. As the haze lessens, I can discern the hint of curious

metallic tubes puncturing Kenji's drained husk. Professor Fuji arrives at my side in time to observe dozens of tubes inject a radioactive green fluid into Kenji's mummified form. The grad student's complexion regains a cruel parody of its original state, veins pumping a neon green coolant that saturates every pore of his carcass. Despite this infusion, Kenji's eyes remain lifeless and unseeing. Whatever the original purpose of the capsule, my friend Kenji is dead. Trying his best not to retch into his air mask, Professor Fuji doubles over, hyperventilating. Deafening panting fills the airwaves. Fuji is losing it. A panicked beast seeking escape from the patient predator. I can see it, for I recognize that wild and trapped sensation within myself.

I want to leave this place now, but a baffling morbidity roots me. I am forced to pick the diseased fruit of my own ambitions. That crazed stare in Fuji—Japanese, American; in the final analysis, we are human. Culture matters not when faced with the darkest secrets of the universe. Pain stabs my gut as acids in my stomach count me among the all too human tribe.

There is a crackle of shouting on the radio followed by muffled echoes from far away. At the other side of this gargantuan room, the other team—they have found something. As we hurry to join up with them, I can't help but glance at the pods along the way; most are full. A shiver sneaks down my spine. There could be thousands in this room alone. Thousands of serpent men . . . it takes excruciating minutes to reach our still living teammates. It is a relief to have my back to the disturbing army of serpentine creatures and, to my shame, to be distanced from Kenji's final resting place.

On the chamber wall is an oval gate, its opening twice the height of our tallest team member. Framing the portal are square jade blocks encrusted with rare stones easily worth an emperor's ransom. Several in our group cast longing expressions at this treasure, an undisguised glimmer of greed darkening the expressions of Fuji and his bodyguards. Inscribed upon the jade are carvings in a language even I am unable to decipher. Fear sticks in my throat as I walk into the jade portal. The smell of ozone penetrates into my mask as we emerge into a circular room of glassy volcanic walls. A prickly sensation crawls across my skin like ants. The static electricity must be even worse in here. When Professor Fuji and I enter, I see that Jiro and Emi seem to have noticed something. Joining them already squatting on their haunches, it is the only effective way to examine the realistic engravings on the dome shaped ceiling. Jiro, forgetting to engage his two-way radio, excitedly shouts something but his mouthpiece muffles it. The only part I pick up is about "the Six Realms." I stand up to better examine this place. It is impressive. Larger than a gymnasium, our footsteps endlessly echo on the shiny basalt floor. The air, a clinging dry-heat, of which I am only able to equate to an experience in Death Valley. An unidentifiable ominous glow illuminates our surroundings.

As I reach the center of the room, a strange icy-heat comes from the pouch of my dive suit. My jade artifact. Dominating the floor is an eight-pointed star formed by deep grooves etched into the glossy basalt. The unintelligible pictograms carved upon the jade portal also run parallel with the grooves of the star. At the tip of each star point is a circular cradle flush with the ground. Two are empty. Six are filled with pulsating white ellipticals, identical to that in my possession. A large intricate carving of an eye aflame nests within the center of the octagonal symbol. Sheer unadulterated power ripples throughout my awareness. At the most primal level, a tinge of racial memory. This symbol on the floor is an arcane key to unbridled cosmic chaos. The others too seem shaken by the foreboding masterpiece filling the floor of what can only be a ritual chamber. Of what rituals I am far too frightened to contemplate.

A wild-eyed Fuji excitedly grabs me by the shoulders. My scuba mask's built-in radio crackles and hisses. "The stones. They are the

same as the Imperial Regalia, the *Yasakani no Magatama*. Can't you see? Don't you understand?"

Mute silence is my answer. I stand helpless to reply to the madman painfully squeezing my shoulders. Inhuman desire fills his eyes, and upon watery black pupils my reflection. In this cursed place, I wonder how far gone I myself am. I wonder how much it has consumed my own sanity.

Fuji's remaining enforcers fall to their knees: I can see their eyes trapped in their Plexiglas cages. Their eyes, perfect white orbs, lidless, unblinking in . . . reverence. Their strange behavior is overshadowed as Fuji and Jiro begin to sharply bicker. A bright metallic hiss to my right returns my attention to the small clan of killers. The Yakuza have unsheathed their katana blades.

Our mask radios crackle with a firm female voice. "It is time." At this bold proclamation, everyone in the room faces the speaker. The remaining two tattooed assassins brandish razor sharp weapons as they corral the five remaining sacrificial lambs into the center of the ritual chamber.

The woman, pleased at the relative ease of this endeavor, continues, "You witless researchers will not defile our most sacred temple. Since our founding millennia ago, we have searched for the legendary temple of the Ryu. Thank you for leading us to the birthplace of the Japanese race. We will restore the emperor and our people to their rightful place in the world. Our lord awaits, come and bear testament to his glory . . . and his hunger."

As with the rest of the captive audience, Fuji looks equally bewildered at this development. Sweat beads on his brow. His lips form words without any sane accompaniment of sound. In a quick movement, the professor shoves his hands into his shoulder pack. Before the closest blade can bridge the distance, an Uzi appears in Fuji's hands only a second later. The Yakuza, realizing they are outgunned, fall back, but never lower their killing blades. We are all surprised—even criminals in Japan are hard pressed to acquire guns. My thoughts go back to the doomed pirates.

Spittle flies from Fuji's lips to impact the inside of his mask. The man waves the blue steel Uzi from side to side in an obvious taunt. With a hiss the radio snaps on. "You are all superstitious fools. All of you! These jade stones are priceless. They are the remaining six Gyoku. And the promise of wealth offered by the rubies, emeralds and diamonds in the portal are beyond calculation. The prestige of these will guarantee a chair at Todai and the eternal gratitude of the imperial household. We can all be rich. All of us!"

Crouching down while carefully maintaining the aim of his weapon on the gangsters, Fuji pulls one of the jade stones from its socket. The oily pungent aroma of scorched flesh strikes my nostrils at the same moment the mad Fuji drops to his knees. The jade stone tumbles from his grasp and rolls across the glassy black surface.

Opportunity.

A silver flicker. Metal bites down upon bare tendon. Muscle rips, bone splinters.

—Jiro jabs his elbow striking the woman behind him. A sharp intake of breath, cracked ribs.

Fuji's severed hand, still clutching the Uzi, clatters to the chamber floor. Blood splatters in a circle.

—A gasp. Jiro cradles a fresh crimson stain in his side. Blood and bile mix in final proportions.

Teeth bared, a blood-coated tanto blade drips onto a glowing stone with a greasy sizzle. The Yakuza woman glowers at me. I daren't move. I feel a steady pressure between my shoulder blades. The tip of the third blade. The wetsuit keeps the katana at bay. The saliva in my mouth becomes bitter as my ulcers tear at me from within: acids dissolving healthy pink tissue.

On his knees rocking back and forth, Fuji clutches at a maimed appendage. A blood soaked katana poises over the professor's head. Feeling the executioner's shadow, Fuji shrinks back with a strength borne of animal desperation. With surprising speed, the wounded man scrabbles away from the threat of the blade. Fuji's bloody stump oozes a slippery trail as he moves to the outer edge of the engraved star. Confident, the gangster walks in measured steps toward his wounded prey. Fuji kicks and crawls backwards on the floor, pleading for his life in a pathetic whimper. Reaching the edge of the star, Fuji the panicked beast kicks a stone egg free of its cradle. It bobbles and spins in place next to its old home. The tattooed killer, tired of toying with his victim, purposely strides over to finish the hurbling wreck of a man. Fuji grabs the dislodged jade stone and throws it at his would-be assassin. Striking the killer in the temple, the jade stone hits the ground with a ceramic ring and rolls around like an unexploded grenade. Clutching his eyes, the Yakuza staggers. Scalp freely bleeding, the man has trouble staying on his feet.

A slight tremor at first, the entire chamber begins to violently shake. The four stones still in the star shaped configuration pulsate faster, color shifting to blue-white. I squeeze my eyes shut as tight as humanly possible and yet I cannot cleanse this sensation. The feeling of indescribable dread, repugnant corruption, helpless smothering of all hope—are all in one overwhelming assault. God help me, but I know this terrible suffocation of the spirit. I last felt it only hours ago . . . but that was only a dream. I shake my head to clear the falsehoods of the mind, but no, it clings to me, whispering soul-crushing truths into my deepest delusions. I feel it. All of us do. Indescribable malignance stirs.

A scream rips me from my own struggle. A timeless interval unfolds before some shred of sanity recognizes the scream as my own. Opening my eyes unravels any sense of familiarity to the fabric of the universe I once knew only seconds ago. First, a single ethereal tendril writhes through the solid stone ground within the star. Then, a score more of the corpulent wraith-like tentacles join the initial invader.

Wavering in and out of reality, the otherworldly pseudopods wiggle and whip as if they were the filaments of a leviathan's stomach probing for morsels to ingest and absorb. Yet more tentacles twice the size of a man thread through the engraved sigil on the floor of the chamber. Other than glowing bright orange, the flaming eye stares on unwaring. Two of the unearthly tentacles weave in the direction of Fuji and his tattooed attacker. The former conflict between the two men is forgotten as they try to flee, but they have nowhere to go in the belly of this obsidian beast. The two men quiver, back to back, as three tentacles glob into one and swallow the two men. Cloaked in a bath of unearthly energy, human flesh blisters and disintegrates. Reality blurs and stretches. I cannot . . . accept. . . . Not what I sought. Lynda . . . Help me!

Unable to watch any more, I turn only to be confronted by a tentacle manifesting into physical form. Yet more solidify, into milky translucent tendrils. In an instant, several of the sticky tentacles ensnare an aghast Yakuza woman. Dozens of coils tighten around thrashing limbs. Squeezing the breath from her muscled frame, the twitching lifeless body is liquefied with a sickening crunch as the tentacles ineffectually try to wrench the victim through the unyielding floor to the terror lurking below.

A brilliance rivaling the sun fills the chamber. Blinding rays of white light emanate from the confines of the eight-pointed star. On the ceiling, portrayals of the Six Realms melt as six portals twist open, and separate realities begins to congeal into one distorted whole. A

constant thrumming vibration that began like an earthquake swells with bone-jarring intensity. Pieces of rubble dance on the ground as a stampede of tremors rattle the temple. Within each opening a unique alien vista divulges legions of undulating forms making their way to the gaping portal; gateways into our world. In the black void of one portal, glowing white entities fly ever closer. In another, lumbering reddish beasts with weapons raise their clubs and howl.

On the glassy basalt floor, in the center of the eight-pointed star, enormous twin horns emerge through the solid rock. A thick musky odor permeates the acrid chamber air.

With their last tattered ribbons of reason, Jiro and Ishii simultaneously find enlightenment. Clark's friends stumble toward the orphaned Gyoku rolling haphazardly around the shuddering chamber floor. Using a cloth, Jiro finds his mark. Ishii is not as fortunate as a discorporate entity lunges from the portal above to plunge a diaphanous hand into Ishii's chest. The young Japanese man ages in the blink of an eye, smoking flesh putrefying as the corpse hits the floor.

Inexorably, the bony brow of an unspeakable creature joins twin horns above the stone surface floor. Twin jets of steam billow through non-porous rock. A long bony ridge ending in a snout surfaces from the stony plane.

Lynda—Clark Sharpley remembers. Soul wrenching pain brings him back, if only for a moment. The gray haired man begins to chant.

"Dragon slumbers deep. Serpent's tongue blindness keeps. In the blood, truth creeps. Om Mappo Ryûjin Hum. *Om Mappo Ryûjin Hum!*"

An unholy roar of fiery defiance reverberates through the six dimensions of reality.

Corpulent white tentacles fade into ethereal form. Clark Sharpley raises the stone from the satchel over his head. *"Om Mappo Ryûjin Hum."*

Several ghostly tendrils retreat into the basalt ground. The pungent aroma of smoldering flesh. Oily smoke trails from the Stanford professor's hands. It takes all his determination to carry the glowing jade stone to the edge of the inscribed star. With a strangled cry, the man drops the artifact into the nearest depression. A perfect fit, the portals in the dome ceiling snap shut. A flash of white. A wall of clawing white-hot energy surges through the room. *Om Mappo Ryûjin Hum.* Yes.

Chanting, Sharpley hurries to gather the throbbing Gyoku stone key Ishii was unable to. *Om Mappo Ryûjin Hum.*

A shout erupts, it has a woman's timbre. Emi Ochi. The severe woman has the Yakuza's razor sharp tanto to Jiro Hasafumi's throat. Frozen as a statue, Jiro crouches with the sixth jade Gyoku only inches from dropping into its rightful place. Jiro's hand smokes as the white-hot stone burns through its cloth prison. *Om Mappo Ryûjin Hum.*

An aura shimmers about Emi, slowly congealing and condensing to reveal the towering shadowy form. A vague flickering outline of a humanoid serpent superimposed over her solid shape.

For a second, Jiro's and Clark's eyes meet.

This is the way it must be.

Jiro nods. He closes his eyes, a prayer to Amida.

The lithe form of Emi emits the disjointed cruel laugh of two beings united as one.

A swift motion.

A fountain of blood sprays in jets. Jito's carotid artery opens to the air. Fingers loosen. The jade egg drops into the star point. *Om Mappo Ryūjin Hum.*

A searing flash ripples through reality divided.

A horrendous implosion of blistering energy, scouring the outside perimeter of the room.

Accelerating. . . towards the center.

Clark Sharpley jams the stone into the seventh depression.

Lynda. . .

Nothingness.

☯ ☯ ☯

Glaring light. A white room.

Spotless.

Voices, muffled at first, come from a great distance and increase in resolution. Hard-soled footsteps strike waxed linoleum.

"Yes, we are really rather proud of this one. If you follow me into our newly dedicated Yotsubishi wing you'll see what I'm talking about." Leading the men in business suits, the young Japanese man in a white smock puts a pen behind his ear.

In the rear of the small tour, an older graying man in the same uniform hurries to the middle of the assembly. "We offer only the best in treatment here at the Tokyo Institute for Wellness. I want to thank you for taking out time from your trade summit to visit us. As you can see, gentlemen, Japan takes pride in the field of medicine and treatment."

At the older doctor's gesture, the group stops in front of a pair of doors. Two of the guests carefully lean toward a small square window to look in but do not touch it as if something contagious festers on the spotless door.

"In the interest of internationalism, we have taken on foreign patients. Take this poor individual for example. Strange case. He was found wandering the beaches of Naha, bloodied and naked, clutching that satchel. As you can tell, our staff is proudly multi-lingual, but the patient speaks in incoherent phrases. When we try to take that book from him he rocks back and forth and chants. I apologize for the state of his room, but we cannot clean the writing off the walls. Poor spirit, we are doing the best we can for him. Amida preserve him. Now, if you follow me, I will show you our gift shop in the lobby."

The broken man, back to the window, continues to scrawl on the page of the book. Occasionally he licks the tiny stub of his pencil. Unnatural lights bathe the room. It doesn't matter that he has already written on the same page a hundred or more times. Layers upon layers of indecipherable scrawls crowd onto the sheet. The face in the window lingers, staring at the walls. Scrawled upon every available surface of the walls in roman characters, Japanese, Tiberan, Chinese and a dozen other languages is one phrase. Over and over again. *Om Ryūjin Mappo Hum.* Noticing an audience, the man slinks into the corner to huddle away from prying eyes.

Becoming aware that his group has left him behind, the dignitary rugs his coat tails to hurry down the corridor. He stops. Movement in the next window catches the corner of his eye. Something green. Not able to help himself, he stares in. Sitting in a chair, unrestrained, limbs askew like a rag doll, unfocused eyes stare back at the man. A tangled mess of shiny black hair half covers a beautiful face. Unnerved, the man looks away.

He hesitates, looks down the hallway, then to the patient's nameplate, and again at the square window displaying the catatonic woman. EMI OCHI. His group is due at a special dinner at the Imperial Palace. There is even talk that they will get to see the imperial treasures. He's heard that the comma shaped jewel, the Yasakani no Magatama, is made of pure jade. Now that's got to be worth seeing. Clearing his throat, he hurries to the waiting elevator. ☯

Introduction

The Emerald Lama, avatar of Hastur, bestowing enlightenment.

Japan, jewel of Asia, land of the rising sun, island nation, economic powerhouse, home of ancient tradition.

Japan, dark mirror to the world, disaffected child of the setting sun, redoubt of extreme ultra-nationalism and zaibatsu trade wars, final dwelling place for the deepest esoteric secrets of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Two Japans.

One, a bright modern technical wonder of glass and steel; the other, a shadowy labyrinth of corrupt feudal customs. Both co-exist uneasily on a string of volcanic islands in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of China.

Yet overlooked in this Yin-Yang dichotomy is that the coveted archipelago of Japan is also a battleground of primordial entities who once ruled the Empire of the Sun. Ones who remember a golden age. Beings who will themselves not to be forgotten.

AZATHOTH. HASTUR. YIG. NYARLATHOTEP. CTHULHU.

Japan, cold glittering star of enlightenment
In the black void of ultimate cosmic truth.

THE MILLENNIUM IS HERE.

THE THIRD AND FINAL AGE OF MAN IS OVER.

MAPPO has come.

BUDDHA WILL NOT SAVE YOU.

INTRODUCTION

Using This Book

The greatest secret of invisibility—obey the customs of the village you enter.

—Musashi Miyamoto, *The Swish Ring*

In most Cthulhu Mythos fiction, Asia is a crawling nest of unspeakable activity, a mysterious destination populated by inscrutable people involved in forbidden acts. Perhaps at the beginning of the twentieth century such a view was easy to understand, but as we start the twenty-first century, the earth has become a global community in every sense of the word. Few corners of the world remain unexplored or unilluminated by the lamp of reason in this scientific age. The fewer places there are to hide, the more bewildering and shocking the experience when we suddenly face cosmic terror.

In this book you will find a fairly comprehensive portrayal of the culture, history, and people of Japan, presented in a Lovecraftian setting. Though we speak of the "real life Japan," here and there liberal dabs of artistic license liven things up, blend things harmoniously into the Cthulhu Mythos, and serve the general interest of colorful supernatural drama. Some effort is needed to understand Japan's culture well enough to present scenarios which convey the rueful flavor of Japan, but the learning curve is not steep. After an enjoyable climb, you will discover exotic and alien Japan.

The intent of *Secrets of Japan* is to present a whole new world of possibilities for keepers and investigators wishing to take their adventures East. It is aimed mostly at keepers, since they must prepare the settings for the players. A player's book is in preparation; it greatly advances player-character creation, and contains much about Japanese expectations and daily life.

Japan is the playground of over two millennia of history and everything its culture brings to it. This earthly place is but a half day distant from the United States, yet in its prevailing thought and consciousness it might as well be on another planet or in another dimension. Japan can be a place as alien to the Westerner as the surface of the moon. And, like the moon, it is best not approached without the proper preparation and gear. In this book, we approach the Cthulhu Mythos from a different perspective, one not ridden by Judeo-Christian or Greco-Roman concepts. Perhaps a new way of looking at Cthulhu and his pals results after sharing some plates of raw squid and sashimi with your newfound Japanese friends. . . .

Imperfect Mirrors

Chin Liao said:
"Do not 'practice' the Tao to gain perfection,
rather BE the Tao and become perfect and flawed—
the path of immortality is both and neither."
—Chin Liao, *The Tao of Immortality.*

When roleplaying in an unfamiliar environment, stereotypes of Japan may become an important pitfall. There are many stereotypical perceptions of Japan: In the United States, retirees remember Japan in the context of a horrible conflict a half a century ago, in which family and friends were lost. Those wounds may have healed but the memories did not. Middle-age America envisions Japan in terms of images—geisha girls, samurai, sushi, and good consumer products. The younger generation sees Japan for its animation, karaoke, and video games—all cultural exports of recent years. All these are surface features that the average tourist picks up, but they do not add up to a portrait of a complex living culture. Stereotypes exist when, lacking knowledge, people fall back upon oversimplified and inaccurate examples found in the media. All stereotypes contain a grain of truth, and all stereotypes are oversimplifications.

Stereotypes cannot be totally avoided, but the more earnestly you try to delve into a new environment, the more enjoyment you will derive from the challenges and accomplishments the experience affords. A martial arts chop-socky scenario is perfectly okay, as is a scenario with a neo-samurai flavor, and there are dozens of role-playing environments that offer such stereotypical portrayals of Japan. *Call of Cthulhu* is many things to many people, and the *Cthulhu Japan* series

is intended to supply a similar width. *Secrets of Japan* will help those who desire in-depth material for Japan-centric campaigns, as well as those wishing for exotic settings as a backdrop.

The *Cthulhu Japan* keeper and investigator books follow the parable of the onion so often used to describe modern Japan. Each chapter peels away a perspective seemingly familiar to visitors, to reveal an unfamiliar one beneath it. The keeper, or the casual reader, can delve as deeply as wished. A Japanese saying goes that, on the surface, the Japan of today seems familiar and Westernized. It's when you look closer that the façade peels away, revealing a deeper layer which offers new surprises. The average foreigner readily adjusts to the initial tailspin, and adopts the new revelations. Then, while thinking that he or she has surely gotten a handle on what Japan is, in a week or a month yet another layer is revealed. And then another. The once-complacent foreigner is thrown into dizzying frustration.

This is culture shock. It sounds facile to those who have never experienced it, but it is a real phenomenon. Culture shock affects visitors according to their disposition and temperament. Some foreigners respond to it rationally, others react in the extreme—be it going ultra-native and walking around in ninja gear, or becoming a total xenophobe who never even bothers to learn a simple "hello" in Japanese.

In *Secrets of Japan*, the side effects of culture shock are explored as an optional complication for investigators. Japan can be so different from anything a visitor has ever experienced that the effects of culture shock while in Japan can be pronounced. (See pages 56–57 for more information.)

Those long time players who worry about integrating into such a different setting—not to mention the language barrier so often present in any foreign country—need not fear. These problems can be surmounted easily and plausibly and are discussed at length in chapters to follow. In Japanese mythology and history you will find as many parallels with the Cthulhu Mythos as divergences. The parallels exist because we're all human (most of us, anyway), no matter where we live, or what language we speak, or what we think is cool.

Also presented is a salting of native Japanese investigators. Including these new Japanese player characters in the mix helps smooth out many potential difficulties facing foreign investigators from previous *Call of Cthulhu* campaigns. Modern Japan being a land of contrasts and conflict, Japanese-bred investigators will have unique challenges of their own to deal with, in addition to gigantic ambulatory sushi.

Horrid Humor

"What's that? A monster book?" Said my Japanese boss, looking over my shoulder.

To which I nodded.

Upon seeing a picture of the Great Old One, Cthulhu, he eagerly said, "Hey, that's an octopus, right? We call that 'tako' in Japanese. Fried tako is delicious, you know!"

To which I sighed.

—True Story in Author's Life.

Yes, Japan is just a bit different. Many things that Westerners find downright repugnant, are looked upon fondly by the average Japanese as haute cuisine. And that's only the most superficial of comparisons. It stands to reason that maybe, just maybe, the Japanese might have a whole different spin on the Lovecraftian Mythos from their unique cultural perspective. So as you munch on

What modern Japan is NOT

FOR THE JAPAN-O-PHILES

While much of the material in *Secrets of Japan* is taken from real life, the foremost aim in the creation of a Lovecraftian Japan is entertainment. No one book can please everyone with its contents but a balance has been sought in the books of *Cthulhu Japan*.

Some will complain about an incorrect fact, or that some historical event is described vaguely or inaccurately. Some of this is oversight, some of it a purposeful filtering of the facts, and a small amount was seen as unimportant to the content of this book. However every effort was made to maintain the Japanese flavor in this book. Sometimes historical and cultural accuracy is too constraining for anything "interesting" to happen in what is essentially a work of fiction. Famous people and trendy items within Japanese culture change rapidly; losing them was avoided, so that this book would not be dated before it ever went to press.

To those who would have liked to have read about their favorite place, cultural oddity, historical figure, or even another way to handle the concept of *Cthulhu Japan*—only so much can be included in a book. Things may have escaped the eye of the developer or presented no advantage within the fictional setting laid out in *Secrets of Japan*. Some ideas were omitted as too derivative, clichéd, or stale, or requiring too much back story.

Take a step back from the details to consider this book for what it is: the first in the *Cthulhu Japan* series. Put aside your Japanese/English dictionaries and encyclopaedias. Suspend your disbelief, get comfy under your futon and enjoy the tales within *Cthulhu Japan*, or they may enjoy eating you. *Cthulhu Japan* is for everyone, not just Japan scholars.

your fried raku while reading this book, try not to look too closely at your food or you may find it looking back at you.

While *Cthulhu Japan* is about horror, specifically Lovecraftian horror in an Asian setting, a little dose of humor here and there by the keeper provides welcome relief. Humor has many uses in a night of gaming.

Humor can provide a release—a harmless interlude before squid-boy gets busy with the investigators.

Humor can also be a false scare that puts the investigators off guard to the tentacled threat hiding in the noodle bowl at the ramen shop.

Humor from cultural misunderstandings can be gentle reminders that "You're not in Kansas anymore, Toto."

("Toto," by the way, is a well known name brand of urinals in Japan. It gives "Christmas Cake" a whole new meaning.)

Humor will relax everybody and make familiarity with the Japanese setting come more rapidly. Clever in-jokes naturally arise when people immerse themselves in an environment, so much faster for both phenomena when it's fun. For they feed each other . . . in a good way, that is.

Humor can come when least expected. Who would think that ambulatory food could be worth a giggle? You will, when bearing witness first-hand to *odori-ebi*, a sashimi dish of "dancing shrimp." The exotic cuisine of Japan includes a bowl of live shrimp with whom hungry patrons duke it out. Your average foreign investigator is going to lose his appetite when the shrimp squirts his first volley.

"And you expect me to battle Cthulhu after this?"

"No, we'd like you to do karaoke with us. The latest song is 'Hato Katsuru.' Wait! Where are you going? Ah, you are looking for *Toto*, perhaps?"

Islands of Mystery

". . . Darkness lies only one inch ahead."
—The Black Monk to a companion afraid of entering a cave on the Tokkaido, *The Mysterious Path.*

Most troubling to modern cosmopolitan Japanese are the unexplainable mysteries cropping up all over the land. These mysteries do not fit into their adopted standard Western model of the world. Perhaps such enigmas would be better understood if anyone but a select few who dabble in the arcane arts could remember the old ways and the true nature of the Six Realms of reality.

Take, for example, the numerous supernatural events occurring countrywide in these years of the turn of the millennium. Seldom consulted ancient texts, dismissed as merely folk tales, openly proclaim the placement of the thousands of temples and shrines across the land to be no accident, but a tapping into what is essentially the power grid of the very planet itself. It is commonly known that *kami*, local deities, have long protected the sacred sites where they dwell, but what is not so well known is that the sites also act as conduits weaving together the Six Realms into a stable whole.

Of course, just how to use these energies has been long forgotten by mortals, but the most ancient and sacred of sites in Japan are also the most powerful; randomly escaping energies from these natural nexus points have given rise to numerous supernatural events over the millennia. One of the most sacred places in Japan is the shrine of the goddess Amaterasu on Ise Island, which enshrines the ancient bronze mirror of the sun goddess, one of the three Imperial Regalia symbolic of the emperor's rule.

Another spot of incredible power is the 12,000-foot-high Mount Fuji, a unique symbol of the very identity of the country itself. Fuji is so massive that it is bordered by three prefectures and can be seen from Tokyo two hundred miles away on a clear day.

Many other sites are less well known but no less powerful. Other issues also remain elusive to easy categorization by experts trained in Western scientific theories.

Cryptozoology, for example, has arisen as a small but strong professional field in Japan since the effects of the nuclear fallout of the 1940s and 1950s have caused all sorts of mutations of normal animal life.

But strange creatures in lakes and on isolated islands are only the most modern questions to arise about the land today called Nippon by the ethnic Japanese.

On Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido, an important secret rests close to the breasts of the Ainu people. The Ainu are the original nomadic occupants of the Japanese archipelago; they were driven north by an invading race of a people of Asian stock, the Japanese; a people who appeared from literally nowhere around 3000 B.C.E. to displace the indigenous Caucasian inhabitants. The Ainu have had no choice but to retreat against the ever-increasing crush of these interlopers. They now are relegated to the frigid and desolate climes of unwanted tundra lands in Hokkaido. But the Ainu know the land better than

REMNANTS OF A LOST CONTINENT

Destroyed countries lost to consciousness and history remains

Fringe scholars have long studied the origins of the Land of Wa—the old name for Japan, found in the first historical records of China's Han Dynasty (25–225 C.E.). They hold that Wa is a remnant of a much more ancient civilization, centered on Iu Mu whose golden era was as much as 150,000 years ago.

Most Japanese feel that their race is inherently of divine lineage. Popular myth declares that the Japanese race descends from the sun goddess Amaterasu, who also begot the line of emperors who have kept the imperial lineage pure down through the ages. The moniker "Land of the Rising Sun" for Japan, reflected in the design of the country's flag, is another reference to the divine ancestry of all Japanese.

Some scholars propose that the apparently inborn beliefs of divinity are a racial memory, and consequently hold some truth. Eons of retellings have masked the origins of those who came here from the stars.

Canadian researcher Aaron Tanaka, a longtime resident and researcher of Shintoism, offers examples of non-terrestrial influence in the native religion of Japan: the ubiquitous use of snake symbology; the long-time veneration of dragons—a universal phenomenon in Asia; the ancient *Jomon* Era (10,000 B.C.E.) *dogu* clay figurines featuring insectoid eyes and space-suit-like clothing; and the *kofun*—the massive key-shaped tombs of the first emperors.

Much points to Japan as being an ancient, possibly non-human civilization. Uncovered esoteric knowledge supports the notion of consonance with, or perhaps a previous tapestry of, a non-terrestrial race of beings in Japan's ancient past who had snake-like characteristics.

Also suspicious, and supportive of this theory of a past affinity with a non-human race, are the strange predilections for fish and cephalopods (squid and octopi) by Japanese natives.

any, and they still listen to the old truths the winds whisper. Due to their treatment and marginalization over the millennia, they are understandably reluctant to offer outsiders advice or aid. What are the secrets they protect and why do Ainu shamans and Japanese mediums alike refuse all comments?

In late 2000, an incredibly ancient and monolithic city of unimaginable proportions was officially discovered submerged off the shores of the Okinawan islands—the Yonaguni Monuments. Modern Japanese scientists squabble over the probability that such bizarre, almost non-Euclidean, massive basalt stone structures could be naturally formed. Meanwhile the remaining handful of adherents to the old ways tremble, much as the ground did at those selfsame ruins in the spring of 2001. Why has the Japanese government downplayed the discovery and quashed any stories in the national press? There are rumors that these ruins may be remnants of the mythic Japanese homeland of Mu, the birthplace of emperors. Are these rumors founded? Traditional scientists are hard pressed to come up with explanations.

Since early 2002, a great deal of activity by private interests has whirled around the Okinawan ruin site. Caught in the uproar are sleepy fishing villages, occupied by families who have lived on the island for generations, and who can trace lineage back to when Okinawa was part of the old Chinese kingdom.

The question on the lips of informed scholars is not whether this is an actual city, as the cover stories in the press argue, but to what civilization the ruins belong.

Is it Lemuria? Mu? R'lyeh? Western researchers remain silent.

Cthulhu in a Kimono

Dark waters echo—
Black things which hate all mankind—
Songs of death, R'lyeh.
—Shintaro Ikeda, *Rock Garden on Infinity*

Perhaps the first thing running through a keeper's mind when he picks up this book might be "How in the world am I going to run this?"

Other questions and concerns will soon arise as well:

"How do I, the keeper, make use of this source book and capture the suggested atmosphere of an Oriental setting without having to become an expert in the field of Oriental studies in the process? I don't have that kind of time! How do I set up a convincing scenario? Must not the Japanese setting be nothing more than flimsy window dressing for an adventure just as easily run in a Western setting? I don't want to resort to just putting exotic Japanese tags on a Western scenario. I'm not even sure what a Kabuki actor does—do I dare to use one and risk my players thinking I don't know what's going on? Maybe I should play it safe. Sheesh! Where do I begin with a Japanese scenario?"

But hey, maybe the keeper is thinking of none of these things. Maybe the first thing that comes to mind is something as simple as "Heh heh heh, cool monster!"

To be sure, the main theme in *Secrets of Japan* is still the mind-shattering reality of a Mythos universe, despite what we humans would like to believe about the nature of our world. As well it should be. But the difference for the keeper is the cultural filter through which this dilemma to humanity is examined. In this book, that is the unique cultural milieu of the Japanese. So the keeper can capitalize on using what he already knows, and focus on portraying the Japanese take on well-known Lovecraftian conventions.

Even the most seasoned Mythos investigator will find Mythos entities in the Japanese setting to be fresh and alien, for how can they not be? And while the Japanese archipelago has its fair share of creatures previously unseen by Westerners, the keeper will know that a shoggoth is a shoggoth no matter how you slice and serve it as sushi.

日本語

Japanese (Nihongo)

In this book many native Japanese words will be used. These guidelines will have you chattering (or is that chittering?) like a native in no time. Japanese *(Nihongo)* for the most part has very few inflections and the consonants are always spoken with the same exact inflection. In contrast, English speakers tend to put emphasis on the last syllables of a word. An English speaker might say: "su-SHI," meaning raw fish. The correct pronunciation is the flat "su-shi."

The Japanese used in this book follows several standard conventions below.

VOWELS

a: as in the "a" of "father"

i: as in the "i" of "macaroni"; often weak and unvoiced within words

u: as in the "u" of "blue"; often weak and unvoiced within words

e: as in the "e" of "bet"

o: as in the "o" of "wrote"

ei: a diphthong, as in "ay" sound of "freight"

ai: a diphthong as in " *eye*" sound in "trite"

Vowels that appear in the text with a macron (ā, ē, ō, ū) are pronounced the same as standard vowels but voiced twice as long. You should be careful in saying these properly, for shortening a double

vowel can give a word a whole different meaning. For example, "yūmei" means famous while saying "yuniei" means "to dream."

CONSONANTS

f: as in the "w" of "who."

g: as in the "g" of "goat" at the start of a word; as in the nasalized "ng" of "bring" in the middle of a word.

r: in Japanese there is no sound difference between "l" and "r." More like "l" and rolled a bit.

s: always soft as in the "s" of "sorry."

j: always soft as in the "j" of "jam."

chi: as in "che" of "cheat"; "ch" is said hard.

tsu: this sound is difficult for most foreigners to say or catch at the outset, and is often confused with "su"; begin with a hard "t" sound like "tap," followed by "su." ***Example:*** *"tsunami"—tidal wave.*

Double consonants in the text (the "kk" in Hokkaido) are held for a second beat.

IMPOSSIBLE COMBINATIONS

Japanese is a syllabic language so every consonant (k, s, h, t, n, m, r, y, w) with the exception of the letter "n," is followed by a vowel and cannot end a word. This affects pronunciation of foreign loan words and also presents sounds impossible to form in the language. Firstly, loan words are spelled like they sound; secondly any loan word ending in a consonant will have the closest sounding syllabic attached to it instead.

"Baseball" becomes "ba-i-su-ba-ru" in Japanese; "sports" becomes "su-pu-ru-tsu."

Another problem is that Japanese language has fewer basic sounds than English, so certain sounds don't exist. This presents difficulties for the native and foreigner alike. The sounds of "r" and "l" are indistinguishable to the Japanese ear, "rice" and "lice" sound the same to them. "V" is yet another nonexistent sound and is replaced with "b"; "volleyball" becomes "bari-baru," "violin" becomes "bai-o-rin," "video" becomes "bi-di-o."

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE

One of the first noticeable divergences of Japanese from Germanic and Romance languages is the word order of the parts of speech in a sentence.

English for example is normally ordered Subject, Verb, Object, or S-V-O for short.

S V O

Kentaro ran from the shoggoth.

Japanese, however places the verb always at the end of a sentence, with word order being Subject, Object, and Verb, or S-O-V. This may be a result of the habit of feudal lords always killing the bearer of bad tidings, and so users of the language tried to soften the blow of unfortunate news.

S O V

Kentaro from the shoggoth ran.

Kentaro-san wa sho-go-thu ga hashirimashita.

(Ran, Kentaro[Ran])

ひらがな、かたかな、漢字

HIRAGANA, KATAKANA, AND KANJI

Japanese language was primarily an oral tradition until the importation of the Chinese writing system along with Buddhism from the mainland around 600 C.E. So eager were they to incorporate what was perceived as a much more sophisticated cultural model into their own, the Japanese of that era took the Chinese script, called *kanji*, and overlaid their own pronunciation on pre-existing kanji symbols. So all kanji have the original Chinese reading, *on-yomi*, and the Japanese one as well, *kun-yomi*. The aspirant to fluency was required to learn over 10,000 such Chinese characters.

With only fifty phonemes in the Japanese language, there are hundreds of kanji with the same exact "reading." This leads to confusion to this day. Imagine arbitrarily taking Egyptian hieroglyphs, assigning the Roman alphabet to them, and using hieroglyphics as your daily written language while speaking modern English and you can begin to understand the difficulties presented by the Japanese language.

In the daily life of old Japan, for all but the intelligentsia, using just kanji proved too cumbersome. Two derivative "shorthand" scripts were developed. The flowing and curving hiragana for courtiers and women and the harsh, angular katakana for men and warriors. (See the table on page 32.) These two scripts represent the fifty basic syllabic sounds of Japanese. Using them, they are much more true to the spoken language. But as mentioned, with the hundreds of kanji that represent the same sounds, reading only the two shorthand scripts can be confusing, as the Japanese language normally puts no spaces between words in sentences. So, kanji is used to represent nouns, places, and verb roots.

Today, the writing systems have been greatly systemized. The kanji required for fluency have been reduced to 2,000. Katakana is now used for loan words and bold lettering in advertisements. Despite these simplifications, the fact remains that the written language is the greatest barrier to any incoming foreigner, something Japanese seem secretly to relish as a barrier to keep outsiders out.

Superimposing an alien writing system, Chinese, on the native language created many difficulties within the culture. Some argue that much of a young child's life, from eight to eighteen, is spent memorizing this kanji script into the late hours of the night rather than going out to play, enjoying their childhood, or exploring their surroundings—thus explaining why many Japanese are socially stunted until their college years. In regard to the world at large, the time involved in studying kanji limits the time available to study other languages, leading to the current national fear of not being "international enough" in the next century to compete with other countries.

POLITENESS LEVELS

Japan, a little more than a hundred years ago, was still a feudal society. From the twelfth century until the turn of the nineteenth century, the Japanese language was heavily influenced by the realities of hierarchical feudal relationships. With a classed system of ruler, lords, samurai, and peasants, showing proper deference to those above you was vital to your survival. Even today, while much lower key, a perception of determining your rank in the hierarchy exists among the Japanese. If you are even a day younger than another person you are considered his junior and thus expected to speak in a deferential manner.

English at one time also had such levels of politeness. That was an artifact of European feudalism and chivalry, but over the centuries such terms and manners of speaking have fallen into disuse. Likewise, modern Japan is falling away from it, but language changes slowly and

the change in the status of the nation was fairly recent. Japanese youths are using ultra polite Japanese, *Keigo*, less and less and even have to take formal schooling to learn it nowadays.

There are basically four levels to the Japanese language and adding adornments to a core statement increases politeness. To get a feel for this, here are four English sentences all asking the same thing at a crowded dinner table:

Level 1: ***Vulgar—just plain rude.***

E: "Hey, you! The butter!"

J: "Oy! Ore! But-ta da yo!"

Level 2: ***Plain—spoken to inferiors.***

E: "Pass the Butter."

J: "But-ta o-kuda-sai."

Level 3: ***Honorific—spoken to superiors.***

E: "Please pass the butter?"

J: "Sumi-ma-sen. But-ta wa o-ni-gai-shi-masu."

Level 4: ***Keigo—used for addressing royalty and the like.***

E: "Kind sir, could you please pass the butter if it's not too much trouble?"

J: "Ano, go-men-nasai. But-ta wa o-ni-gai i-ta-shi-maru."

Honorifics

Related to politeness levels is the attaching of honorifics to words to make them more polite. The most ubiquitous are:

PERSONAL TITLES

Japanese affix the following to the end of names, both first and last, as a form of respect. There are differing levels to these terms as well.

chan/kun: Casual, friends or people of lower rank. Kun is reserved for boys, chan for girls. **Examples:** Ken-kun, Yuki-chan.

san: Polite. Safe for most circumstances. **Example:** John-san.

sama: Honorific, used with customers or royalty as well as sarcastically. **Examples:** Hime-sama—princess. Okyaku-sama—honorable customer.

"O" AND "GO"

Most often used by women to soften their language, these are attached to the front of many words to make them sound less harsh. **Examples:** O-urai—toilet. Go-yukuri—take your time.

Hiragana and Katakana

Hiragana phonetic syllabary derived from Kanji

あ	か	が	さ	ざ	た	だ	な	は	ば	ぱ	ま	や	ら	わ
a	ka	ga	sa	za	ta	da	na	ha	ba	pa	ma	ya	ra	wa
い	き	ぎ	し	じ	ち	ぢ	に	ひ	び	ぴ	み		り	
i	ki	gi	shi	ji	chi	dji	ni	hi	bi	pi	mi		ri	
う	く	ぐ	す	ず	つ	づ	ぬ	ふ	ぶ	ぷ	む	ゆ	る	
u	ku	gu	su	zu	tsu	dzu	nu	fu	bu	pu	mu	yu	ru	
え	け	げ	せ	ぜ	て	で	ね	へ	べ	ぺ	め		れ	
e	ke	ge	se	ze	te	de	ne	he	be	pe	me		re	
お	こ	ご	そ	ぞ	と	ど	の	ほ	ぼ	ぽ	も	よ	ろ	を
o	ko	go	so	zo	to	do	no	ho	bo	po	mo	yo	ro	o
														ん
														n

Katakana second phonetic syllabary used for foreign loan words

ア	カ	ガ	サ	ザ	タ	ダ	ナ	ハ	バ	パ	マ	ヤ	ラ	ワ	ファ
a	ka	ga	sa	za	ta	da	na	ha	ba	pa	ma	ya	ra	wa	fa
イ	キ	ギ	シ	ジ	チ	チ	ニ	ヒ	ビ	ピ	ミ		リ		フィ
i	ki	gi	shi	ji	chi	dji	ni	hi	bi	pi	mi		ri		fi
ウ	ク	グ	ス	ズ	ツ	ツ	ヌ	フ	ブ	プ	ム	ユ	ル		
u	ku	gu	su	zu	tsu	dzu	nu	fu	bu	pu	mu	yu	ru		
エ	ケ	ゲ	セ	ゼ	テ	デ	ネ	ヘ	ベ	ペ	メ		レ		
e	ke	ge	se	ze	te	de	ne	he	be	pe	me		re		
オ	コ	ゴ	ソ	ゾ	ト	ド	ノ	ホ	ボ	ポ	モ	ヨ	ロ	ヲ	フォ
o	ko	go	so	zo	to	do	no	ho	bo	po	mo	yo	ro	o	fo
														ン	
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SACRED ORIGINS OF THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE

Combining ancient Chinese kanji, said to carry power in their very symbols, with the sacred language of emperors, Japanese, or Nihongo, has been of great benefit to Japanese sorcerers over the ages. Some of the most powerful talismans and enchanted texts in the East have been created by Kotodama masters, sorcerers able to call forth the very power stored in each kanji symbol as they write and chant. Now this is almost a lost art. The more vehement of this group claim that Japanese is the music of the gods, and Chinese its proclamations. Any being who can master these can manipulate the very threads of reality.

RELATIONSHIPS AND TERMS OF ADDRESS

otohsan: father
okahsan: mother
ani: older brother
ane: older sister
otohto: younger brother
imoto: younger sister
ojiisan: old man, pop, grandfather
obahsan: old lady, grandma
ojisan: uncle, affectionate/sarcastic for older man
obasan: aunt, affectionate/sarcastic for older woman
itoko: cousin
sempai: elder classmate/friend/advisor
name+*kun:* good friends; used for males
name+*chan:* affectionate/cute; used for females
name+*san:* formal; used for strangers
name+*sama:* ultra polite; used for customers/superiors
name: when referring to oneself, also used by others in casual conversation

Why This Book?

I have always had a love for horror literature. Gothic classics from Mary Shelley to Bram Stoker have always fired my imagination.

They shared a trepidation about the new centuries to come and perhaps because of this they pondered the weighty issues of man, mortality, and spirit. I was introduced to Lovecraft quite late, first reading his work in what turned out to be an excellent course, a "Literature and the Occult" class at university. (Oh, how I love liberal education!) But horror long remained a passive passion only, as life pushed me to pursue a study of Japan.

Imagine my surprise upon discovering that my active passion, Japan, hid an excellent horror tradition in the name of Lafcadio Hearn, also a turn-of-the-century writer, also intrigued by the mysterious and supernatural in his new home of Japan. From then on, I sought to fuse two of my greatest passions into one, and to write as a modern analog to Mr. Hearn about the supernatural in Japan at the turn of yet another century.

In homage to Lafcadio Hearn, I write this book at the beginning of the next millennium, also with trepidation at what the future might hold.

First Words, Parting Shots

You cannot catch a monkey unless you act like one.
—The Author.

The key to enjoying this book is to take what you need and leave the rest. Hopefully, you will find subjects and details in this book that you feel bear deeper research, and will dive into the many wonderful and useful books on Japan out there. This book barely scratches the surface. Numerous volumes have been written on various topics touched on here dealing with Japan. I have merely presented that which I felt was the most entertaining. For those wishing to dig further, the bibliography in the back of this book is a good starting point for your research.

It is my fondest wish that, after reading this book, you will hold a special place in your heart for that strange and alien place called Japan.

Michael Dziesinski
Honolulu, Hawai'i

uhh... Mushi Mushi!
THOOM!
Ah silly foreigner. You mean hello right? Mushi is Bug. Mushi is hello.
CRASH!
No! Mushi MUSHI! A bug! B-big bug!
AAAAAH!

Cthulhu Sushi: Stop Bugging Me by Jason Chan

Scroll One: Atmosphere

SECTION ONE: ROLEPLAYING

An overview of present day Japanese society.

Something is Coming

Seek not to understand. Seek nothing. Let yourself be the void.
And when understanding arrives, true enlightenment will follow.
—Zen Proverb.

There is something . . . important . . . coming. It's a vague stirring sensed by every soul with Japanese blood coursing through their veins—a deep, inchoate feeling that can't be grasped. It screams for remembrance, but is only glimpsed on the edge of nightmare.

Upon waking, these fragments are quickly eclipsed by the daily drone of pop music, television drama, and office gossip. Lingering in consciousness is a formless dread, a deep sense of urgency most often channeled into the everyday grind and forgotten. Is the forgetfulness a sanity-protecting safety valve for Japan's inhabitants? Have they lost hold on something much more sacred and valuable by living in a fantasy world of material possessions and diversions?

When not dreaming half-remembered nightmares, sleepers travel to places in the Dreamlands like Old Edo, land of medieval heroes; havens of super-technology like Colony Five; dwellings of the *o-bake-mono*, or even gateways to the Buddhist heavens and hells. All these worlds permeate the waking thoughts of a contingent of painfully shy people, known as *otaku*. These ultimate fans bury themselves heart and soul in fantasy realms, to try to forget the harsh disappointments that reality constantly drums into them, and to shield against the hovering terror all Japanese feel in their hearts.

In the gloomy secret corners of Japan there are beings who refuse to be consigned to the oblivion of fantasy. These things are satisfied to be dormant, as long as they are given the proper respect and rightful fear due them. The "New Japanese" have forgotten their people's origins; these "ancestors" are determined to remind the living of lessons buried with the dawn of the modern age. These beings have not forgotten the darker history of Japan. They relish re-educating Japan's forgetful people whenever they can.

As much as these native monsters of myth disdain the living, they also need them. Much more that is incomprehensible to men slumbers in the cold Japanese waters. Some beings are pleased with Japan's ignorance of the old ways. The gears of destiny set in motion millennia ago may grind the unwary to pulp under leviathan teeth.

This book is about rediscovering Japan's true legacy, a process set in motion before the first emperor ever stepped down from the heavens to rule mankind. Can the heritage be discovered and stopped before the world reaps a bitter harvest?

Something waits for the stars . . . to be right. . . . M.D.

Today's Japan

. . . And castles made of sand, fall in the sea, eventually.
—Jimi Hendrix, from the song "Castles Made of Sand."

Welcome to modern Japan, a country with an identity crisis. Japan, a place where millennia-old traditions clash with the eagerly adopted consumer culture of the West. Japan, where ancient shamanistic Shinto religion blends with modern Buddhism. Japan, an ancient land, which holds many forgotten secrets and treasures. Japan, a land nurturing a people who are spiritually closer to the One than any other, if they could just open their eyes. Japan, repository for some of the world's most powerful archaic artifacts. Japan, where East meets West in a way like in no other Asian country.

This land bristles with contrasts and paradoxes caused by superimposing an alien society, that of the Western World, over a culture that, less than 150 years ago, was steeped in ancient imperial and feudal traditions for over three thousand years. In the push to advance, Japan has incorporated Western ethics and heritage over the framework of a much older cultural model that had worked perfectly for hundreds of generations. But as a result, today's children do not know the social foundations and history of their country.

Today's Japan is a shiny high-tech building erected over a skeleton not of steel and concrete, but of old and rotting timbers of ages past. Japan has tried very hard to catch up with the Western world. In the process of Westernization, it has discarded many old and valued traditions, viewed as so much dead wood blocking progress. With the adoption of Western scientific thought at the turn of the twentieth

century, many Japanese believe Japan firmly left the traditional world of superstition and the supernatural behind. So hard have the Japanese worked at modernization that a collective amnesia concerning native cultural heritage has developed.

An old Japanese proverb goes, "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down." Due to poor craftsmanship in building a modern nation, far too many nails stick up from the timbers of today's social institutions. This Yin and Yang of old and new has created a generation ignorant of its past and ambivalent about its future. All of this selective renovation can only create unnecessary hammering. Where the hammer flies, conflicts within erode group harmony without—something vital to the Japanese mind.

Buddhism also has a proverb that can be applied to the state of modern Japan: it is the concept of *karma*, which compares life to a burning house with no exits except enlightenment. Many Japanese have become content to stay within a home full of smoke and flames rather than risk growth possible outside their common experience. But still, the Wheel of Karma slowly turns, never forgetting, always taking account of the deeds of the suffocating masses.

Man and Machine

Japan has a love affair with machines and inanimate objects that is at once understandable, baffling and darkly disturbing. This obsession with things which require no social interaction reflects the sad state of our country's youth, who can only microwave dinners, and who prefer ATMs to living bank tellers. However, this integration has proven as well: taken to its logical conclusion, Japan may be the first to embrace cybernetic technology—the ultimate fusion of man and inorganic artificial intelligence—into an entirely new species on our planet. The question is: will the electronic echo of a soul inhabit this new lifeform or will it be infested by a synthetic spirit, one incomprehensibly alien?

—Prof. Mari Makuto, excerpt from *Project Yūrei White Paper.*

Now, in a new century, Japan wants to possess the newest and sleekest high technology to decorate its walls. Technology is a cornerstone for the future, and most Japanese believe it will make the country a trendsetter and economic powerhouse in the next century. To this end, modern Japan has firmly embraced high-tech as its new religion and philosophy, with disposable culture and sinful excess its artifacts.

Most Japanese citizens feel much more comfortable with cold robotic gadgets than the inconveniences warm-blooded humans present. The extreme avoidance of social interaction by some Japanese has led to new dysfunctions in an otherwise smoothly interlocking society.

Most new facets of modern society have developed to lessen physical interaction for the sake of convenience, as evidenced by cash machines, vending machines where you can buy anything imaginable, computer networks, and massive video game centers. Youths, welded to TV games for unending hours, find any undertaking more demanding than preparing an instant dinner an impossible task. The contents of video games played by kids are often quite disturbing to the older generation, leading to further questions about the alien morality exhibited by this new generation of zombified and passionless children. Combined with ignorance about the past deeds of the country and the world at large, the social ineptitude of the new generation is the greatest cultural problem facing Japan.

As people wantonly rush to embrace cold metal things, they leave behind a precious shard of their humanity: the human warmth that keeps people centered. Elite corporate elements have taken the Japanese love affair with machines as far as actually wedding metal and flesh together, creating new organisms with a science that seems almost sorcery. This level of technology has not been seen since the ancient Hyperborean civilizations rose, and has not been explored since then due to moral and ethical considerations. Questions arise as to what such high tech wizards and their fleshy automatons deign worthy of worship in the coming new world order.

A Slice of Life

"What you ask is impossible! It is difficult to the extreme!"

"No, what I ask is just beyond your limited sight. Look outside, this ramshackle of wood and rice paper will one day be monolith of glass and steel. But you do not see this, Joken, it is because you are human and lack understanding."

—Oni Lord Daraku to Monk Joken, *Jigoku Zoshi*

Looking past the illusionary mirror to the West, Nippon, as natives call her, is very much a society of stratification and extremes. To see this vividly illustrated, imagine you are in the capital city of Tokyo, the slightly tarnished jewel of Asia.

One of the largest cities in the world, Tokyo is comprised of interconnecting wards resulting in a continuous urban sprawl fifty miles in radius.

Now, of the numerous famous districts in the city, you are in Shinjuku, one of the busiest and most crowded wards of Japan. Gleaming forty-story glass and steel towers loom over an undulating ocean of black hair at street level. As you stand on the bustling corner, thousands of impatient commuters brush past.

Your nostrils are assaulted by the smell of raw sewage emanating from the numerous open grates at your feet, blending unpleasantly with the delicious aromas wafting from the street vendors littering every corner who sell fried octopus and steaming ramen bowls.

While a street scene plays out in front of you, under your feet, in Shinjuku Station, over one million people a day commute to and from work. Loudspeaker vans of the fanatical ultra-right pollute the air with nationalist slogans as oblivious but trendy teens walk down the artificial canyons of the big city with PHS cell-phones glued to one ear.

Hobbling old women, hunched over almost 90 degrees from osteoporosis, push barren baby carriages for support, while well-dressed salarymen in blue suits, silk ties, and suitcases push by in a hurry to get to work. Swarms of bicycles bearing sailor-suit-clad girls on their way to high school rush by as a sunglassed man in a punch-perm, the local Yakuza, guards the door to his club where a stripper dressed in the same sailor suit entertains drunken salarymen. Droves of cliquish college students from Tokyo University, on par with Oxford or Harvard, sit and chat in the coffee shops facing the street comparing their entrance scores, while the young service staff, dressed in identical uniforms, resignedly hope that they might get into a fourth tier university after a second try at entrance exams. All of this is just the briefest of moments on a street corner in Tokyo, but a good still picture of the intense sub-cultures, group-ism, hierarchies, and challenges Japanese life fosters.

Keys to the Setting

Lao Tzu said:

"The delicate smell of incense; the embracing warmth of the hearth fire, the gentle rustle of young bamboo. All these safe comforts you must cast aside if you walk upon the path to unending life, for you will no longer be mortal and such things are of no concern when greater, cosmic things crawl forth."

—as related by Chin Liao in "Analects of the Void," *The Tao of Immortality.*

The key to keeping a Japanese setting feeling authentic is portrayal of the people. Pay attention to the Japanese people and how they deal with the day-to-day challenges their culture presents.

A keeper should try to put himself or herself into the Japanese non-player characters' slippers whenever possible to get a feeling of where the natives are coming from. Keeping non-player character goals in mind, with special attention to how a Japanese would achieve these goals, will go a long way toward distinguishing Asian flavor from Western setting. It's dealing with the people that makes Japan approachable, not a collection of exotic-seeming artifacts.

In private, the byzantine nature of modern Japanese society strikes the average Japanese citizen as just as confusing, contradictory, and (sometimes) as frustrating as it does to the foreigner fresh off the plane. The secret is that a Japanese person has been at the game longer and is better at it. To cope with their society, most Japanese are of two minds, a behavior recognized by special terms in Japanese: *tatemae* (outside face) and *honne* (true intentions). Deep down, the Japanese are the same as people in the West: they *are* human, after all. His or her motivations and desires are the same as anybody's in the West; this is honne. But when they act upon those desires, they must inevitably go through the cultural framework they grew up with. This is where tatemae comes in: the face put on to the outside world to work within society as smoothly as possible. Working through tatemae and guessing

TYPICAL STREET SCENE IN DOWNTOWN TOKYO, THE SHINJUKU DISTRICT

what another's honne might be and then acting upon it to aid that person without being asked is what Japanese society is about.

When a connection is made between people, no matter what their personal background, a bond is made. Humanity is touched, and friendship grows even from disparate beginnings. This is why even the most seemingly inflexible Japanese person can befriend foreigners and become true friends, even bending societal rules and taking great risks for their friends if they must. Once a Japanese has cautiously worked through the tatemae they have erected for protection, honne can shine through in private matters.

When a person doesn't feel that a situation merits revealing his or her inner honne self, he or she resorts to a system of debt and favors called *on* (a favor, indebtedness) and *giri* (duty to repay a favor). In public life, Japanese are constantly trying to balance this tab so as not to incur too much debt to any one person and to repay it as soon as possible. Of course, there are certain people who can never be repaid, like professors, doctors, and people who have saved your life, so the best that can be done is to show them the utmost deference.

This is where the custom of gift giving, *o-rei*, comes from in Japan. The custom can easily slide into a kind of consensual corruption not understood by Westerners. A small souvenir, *o-miyage*, from a distant place for office mates comes from *on/giri* as much as a million-dollar golf club membership. Most Japanese don't see it as problematic to accept such gifts until it comes out into the harsh light of the media. Then *haji*, shame, begins to show its face.

At first, newcomers will be shocked by the dramatic difference between their own culture and Japanese culture, but the longer a person stays, the more he or she becomes accustomed to this new way of doing things. A foreigner may not agree with the way things are done, but the wise person does what he or she must to function within society. The Japanese feel the same way, but they take dis-pleasurable duties as just a part of life.

Japan is a highly populated country, with half the population of the United States packed into a landmass approximately the size of California, Oregon, and Washington State combined. Of this land, most of the archipelago is mountainous and uninhabitable, so people huddle in incredibly dense populations on coastal cities. Japanese society has had to adapt to close quarters and too many people. The culture demands many social structures to keep the wheels greased and maintain *wa*, or harmony. Except perhaps to disaffected youth, harmony is something very important to most Japanese. Wa is worth remembering when wondering what a Japanese would do in a situation raising the possibility of conflict.

Wa in action: doing what's best for the common good, submerging your own desires if need be, and not hurting another's feelings and pride. Before a Japanese character acts, you, the keeper, should ask what considerations the native culture demands of the non-player character. This is often the first consideration of any Japanese, as structure and hierarchy in life is paramount to harmony.

Once you settle on the basics for the Japanese mindset, physical artifacts and social institutions can naturally augment the living and breathing non-player characters. Things such as kimono-clad geishas and sumo wrestlers won't seem like garnishes to make a setting feel "Japanese" but rather a natural extension of the people and their attitudes.

If you are focused on portraying modern Japan, you need not worry too much about the older, more exotic aspects of the country, such as temples, geisha, samurai, and such if you don't want to. Japan, after all, is a modern first-world country with an economy second only to the United States. Daily life is very much consumer driven with many contemporary Western issues present, but sifted through a

Japanese filter. You might keep the old and traditional glimpse of Japan in reserve as a rare treat to dip into and offer a surprise or two for complacent investigators.

In the third millennium, Japanese don't walk around in kimonos carrying *katana* swords. They wear Western business suits and casual clothes, though uniforms of some sort are prevalent in companies and schools for the purpose of unity. To the Japanese mind there is a time and place for everything. Traditional cultural assets are for special occasions and entertainers only.

Another consideration when in a Japanese setting is that several thousand years of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism color the views and attitudes of the Japanese. Western humanistic thought hasn't penetrated beyond the boardroom and classroom. Japanese are still a bit superstitious: they give the supernatural wide berth, and respect its demands. They don't try to explain away the unknowable with the scientific method but rather accept it at face value and deal with it pragmatically. Millennia of civilization shows all things are possible. To the Japanese way of thinking, maintaining harmony and honor are principal concerns, not disbelief and confrontation. This Asian ethos is perhaps why, historically, a Japanese individual is not so concerned for his life when honor is at stake. Although self-preservation is a primal urge, Buddhist upbringing has taught the commoner that the spirit will reincarnate, so dealing with a doomed situation is best approached constructively from the view of what actions will bring the best karma.

By paying attention to the roles Japanese characters play within their society, keepers should have little problem running a Japanese-style scenario. One or two well-done Japanese non-player characters do wonders for setting the right pace and mood. Remember that facts and figures are not so important; the game is about everyone having fun being scared and capturing the atmosphere you're looking for.

This source book should provide enough basic information to get you started running Japanese-style adventures. If players and keeper wish to do further research into background materials, that's certainly a healthy thing to do. In the appendices at the end of this book are some recommended starting points, but there is a wealth of knowledge on Japan in bookstores, libraries, and on the internet.

Themes

I did not see his face for shadow and straw obscured any clear observation of his visage. However, it was not his appearance that held my attention, but his words, and riveting were they for he shared my dismay at the rapid disappearance of traditional Japan in the crushing wheel of progress called Westernization by the current Meiji Emperor. It was with this very sympathy and with my goal of plucking threads of the supernatural and strange from the rich but fading tapestry of Nippon that he chose to approach me.

—Lafcadio Hearn relating an encounter with a mysterious guest in *Supernaturalia Japonica*.

Don't worry about being too constrained in the type of Japanese scenario you choose to run. Japan provides a rich and fertile setting for many kinds of stories.

If you fancy dwelling on the esoteric and religious aspects of Japan, you may well base a scenario on earthy Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and the mysteries that such a path provides. Here too reside the halls of imperial royalty and power among the aging timbers of shrines. The lives and society of priests and monks are truly a world apart from the hustle and bustle of the economic giant that is working

Japan. Truly, these holy people are the last bastions of pure Japanese tradition and belief, guarding ancient and long forgotten treasures of a time spoken of only in tales.

Maybe you have a yen to portray the modern, consumer-driven culture of the youth. Kids forced to wear quasi-military uniforms throughout their school years rebel in any way they can when the chance arises. Wildly dressed gangs often wearing second-hand American blue jeans and basketball shoes squat in alleys and public squares. When confronted, they cower or talk dreamily of emulating some American movie star. Middle-class high school girls sell themselves to salarymen so they can buy Gucci bags. Children raised on the products of the West, they grow up confused and frustrated when elders try to stifle their Western attitudes, and yet they reflexively recoil at foreigners from the very countries they worship. These kids are not afraid to dabble in things they don't understand, just for the sake of being cool. It is here where Westerners would fit in most easily but also be in for a bumpy ride. Unlike the older generation, Japanese youth don't consider harmony and respect important but only their own immediate whims. Chaos and hidden danger reign daily in dance clubs and popular youth hangouts.

The entertainment industry is another bizarrely fascinating aspect of Japan that offers many interesting avenues to explore. Teen idol factories crank out fresh-faced kids every six months with rumored seedy doings in backrooms between managers and talent. Some people will do anything to become famous. Entertainment in Japan is diverse, from classic Kabuki theater, to lively sumo wrestling, to Enka folk singing in expensive kimonos, to physical comedians whose jokes seem harsh and cruel to the foreign eye, to the aforementioned pop idol scene. In such a bright and energetic environment, many strange phenomena can hide among swollen egos self-destructing from their own hubris.

Business offers its own intrigues. High-ranking people throw around vast sums of money in the interest of entertaining guests with the most perverse of venues. It's an arena infested with corruption and subtle high-stakes power plays. It's telling, perhaps, that of all aspects of Japan, it is the most closely modeled on Western values in order to compete in an international forum. Yet, even here, uniquely Japanese attitudes have a strong sway.

In the halls of power, where the big rollers feel immune to consequences, there are practices that would make even the most open-minded Westerner seem Victorian by comparison. It is here, too, within multi-national corporations and the socialist government of Japan, that servitors and supernatural beings manipulate human affairs. And its foot soldiers are gray-suited businessmen, the salarymen, whose lives approach automation-like routine, giving all to the company and putting family and personal desires second.

As with the rest of the world, wherever the money flows in Japan, there is a dangerous undercurrent of crime. The Yakuza has its fingers in many ventures, both legal and illegal. So entrenched is the Yakuza that there is even an unspoken truce between the police and the Japanese Mafia. In fact, pachinko parlors found in every single city by the dozens, lit with three story high garish neon signs, are thinly disguised gambling halls. There is honor among these thieves, who live by the old *bushi* warrior code, but with the new arrogant youth of today that too seems to be fading. Within the eddies of crime, strange phenomena can find a comfortable home among the hidden violence and gang strife. The criminal underworld is also a stomping ground for ultra-nationalists who dream of a restored Japanese Empire. Their vans patrol with loudspeakers blaring ultra-right slogans at all hours; they occasionally make violent attacks and assassination attempts on prominent public figures.

Or perhaps you are looking for something more sedate and typical of Japanese life. You can easily run a scenario that takes place in a peaceful Japanese community in the countryside where old values are still strong, and foreign conveniences are few. In such rural areas there are unusual things that local farmers and fishermen accept as normal, that more Western-minded Japanese in cities might find horrifying. And of course, few locals talk to outsiders about such private concerns.

Okinawa, five hundred miles south of mainland Japan, while a Japanese prefecture, was for most of its history an independent Chinese kingdom. This tropical clime is very much a Pacific paradise, even to mainland Japanese visitors. An entirely different sort of life unfolds on these shores, lending itself to a Pacific Islander theme. Officially discovered in late 2000 are the highly controversial ancient sunken ruins just off the main Okinawan islands. The massive stone block structures have become the topic of common banter among the locals and debate amongst research diving expeditions.

These themes represent only the barest of threads from which a Mythos story can be woven into a Japanese setting. Further research and the imagination can yield many intriguing opportunities for scenarios based in Japan—and ways to trip up frazzled investigators.

Call of Cthulhu, Anime-Style

By now, we've all seen Japanese animation—*anime* for short—in some form or another. In most video stores and game shops you can find a decent selection of Japanese animation. Some of it is good, some overwhelmingly bad. There is certainly no lack of slimy slithering monsters in Japanese anime as source material for a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario. But the uses to which some anime puts all those slavering tentacled monsters can be disturbing to say the least. Sometimes I have wondered just what in the world was going on in the creators' heads at the time they made a movie.

But there is certainly some excellent work out there, enough to base a scenario or even a whole campaign on. There are memorable characters in anime who could easily set the mood for a whole campaign if used tactfully as non-player characters.

Seeing Japanese Culture First-Hand

Anime is written by artists who, being natives, are steeped in modern Japanese culture. This affects the flavor of the stories they tell with their animation. Many concepts presented in this book like tatemae and honne can be seen first-hand in action in anime. Naturally there are exaggerations, and certain bad points of the culture are glossed over. The artists are telling the story they wish to convey, but as they do, you also witness what Japanese feel is important in their daily life. Even in glaring Japanese rip-offs of famous movies like *Alien* or *Terminator*, they still retell the story through Japanese cultural filters.

Anime Atmosphere

In anime, the atmosphere is often urgent, and even the most fantastical things can and do occur to people. Japanese heroes don't argue or complain about how unfair a situation is, they just plod on ahead and

accept the strange circumstances as best they can. Many of the lighter anime make this into comedy by portraying normal people whose lives are turned upside down by weirdness.

Normal-seeming people are pitted against overwhelming odds and often keep their cool in the most desperate of situations. Just when things seem hopeless, the heroes draw on inner reserves of strength to defeat the villain, but not usually without great cost to themselves. The most dramatic anime has the hero selflessly go into final battle knowing full well that his life may be forfeit. This is a prime example of the *Bushidō* warrior code carrying over into modern Japanese storytelling:

A warrior never shirks or hesitates to fulfill his obligations, even at the cost to his own life. Generally, things are darker and more hopeless in such anime than in a Western story, but because things are so desperate, people take almost suicidal chances. If they succeed, they are heroic, and if they fail, they are cremated.

Magic and raw physical power is thrown about quite liberally in many anime shows. This may be a bit out of character for a *Call of Cthulhu* game, and play balance could quickly become a concern if such power levels are introduced into a game. Often, the power levels of the anime heroes are over-the-top because the enemies they fight are overwhelmingly and insanely powerful.

If a keeper wishes to try this anime-style play, he or she can allow for more fantastic feats, fudge fatal results a bit if the bravery merits it, reduce Sanity checks for smaller monster episodes, be more generous in awards and allowing players to beef up magic and POW statistics, put more breakneck action in the game, let magic points regenerate faster, allow a few enchanted items into the game that will later be key to defeating the baddie, or all of the above.

Anime-style *Call of Cthulhu* should be more visceral and spontaneous, with less time spent with musty tomes and more time out in the field with a trusty ass-kicking talisman. A keeper can also switch back and forth between a normal *Cthulhu*-style atmosphere and anime style, alternating scenarios to offer refreshing breathers to players and keepers alike.

The slower episodes are recovery periods and time to discover what valuable information was accumulated in the break-neck moments. By following the above recommendations and having more monster or cultist confrontations, faster action, overwhelming and almost absurd odds run in a fast and loose way, any of the scenarios in this book can be played anime-style.

Anime-style play isn't about emphasizing Lovecraft's "cosmic horror." In anime, the hero already knows all about gooey and clammy things. The genre is about doing something while you still have a chance. Sure, the anime hero will lose his marbles from seeing a pack of oni tend a victim limb from limb, but he'll do that *after* he has avenged the atrocity and slain the oni. Then the shock can catch up. The characters have the perseverance to do what needs to be done first. Then nature can mete out its due.

GETTING IDEAS

Another wonderful use of anime is to get ideas from other eras and fantastical realms for use in a Japanese setting.

For those looking to zero in on the Cthulhu Mythos flavor of horror in Japan, there are many monster-based anime, and some that don't even involve attacks on nubile young flesh. Based on Kei Kusunoki's *manga* (comic magazine) series is *Curse of the Undead: Yoma*, also titled *Blood Reign: Curse of the Yoma*. It is a tale about a man's journey to the Land of the Dead to discover the fate of a loved one. Another, *Supernatural Beast City*, does have some semi-explicit scenes, but it is about Shinjuku Ward, the center of Tokyo, as a wasteland in a near future, infested by the black malice of hideous monsters. A more subtle horror anime based upon Toshihiro Hirano and Narumi Kakinouchi's manga is *Vampire Princess Miyu*, which builds a melancholy atmosphere as it offers a look into the world of hotoke and yōkai. The vampire princess could even be a Japanese avatar of the Outer God Yidhra, much like Madame Yi of China. Ultraman, Godzilla, and Kamen Rider all fought opponents that looked amazingly similar to Great Old Ones. In one instance, an Ultraman enemy bore a striking resemblance to the Great Old One Byatis.

A keeper can watch a ninja anime like *Dagger of Kamui* and see what flavor a scenario set in 1890s Japan might have. Some other

ninja-flavored anime are *Raven Tengu Kabuto* and *Ninja Scroll*, though the latter is quite odd in parts.

The Japanese seem to love western medieval fantasy, ala Tolkien, but put quite a different interpretation on it. One of the better examples can be seen in *Legend of Lodoss War*. Maybe not Japanese in feel, it still might be useful to keepers wishing to run a game set in the Dreamlands. *El-Hazard*, another anime in the fantasy genre, proves that anime fantasy has "come into its own." *El-Hazard* is a quasi-Arabian comedy/fantasy tale loosely centered around the strange pulp era tales penned by the likes of Edgar Rice Burroughs. The name of the anime itself is an in-joke homage to Lovecraft's Abdul Al-Hazred.

For those leaning towards cyberpunk, *Ghost in the Shell*, based on Masamune Shirow's manga, is an outstanding example of anime set in the near future and the issue of the difference between the human soul and artificial intelligence. Another anime in this style by the same director is the famous *Akira*, based on Katsuhiro Otomo's manga, which incorporates much more horror in its futuristic setting and explores what happens when mankind taps into power not meant for mortals. Using organizations like Yotsuhishi Pti-Mech and Project Yürei as groundwork, a keeper could run scenarios based in Japan thick with a "cyber-horror" feel. Meshing Mythos creatures with cyborgs opens doors of possibilities. *The Guyver—Bio-Booster Armor*, based upon Yoshiki Takaya's manga, is another good anime series with Mythos overtones and has also been adapted into two live action movies. In *Guyver*, a young man becomes a living host to a symbiotic suit of bio-armor that appears on his body when he is threatened. In the anime, the origin of the armor is unclear, but in the manga the back-story is much more detailed. Millions of years ago, aliens genetically altered the evolution of apes with the specific intent of breeding a race of bio-weapon super soldiers. *Guyver* presents a wonderful plot vehicle with a uniquely Lovecraftian twist. Were the aliens the mi-go, the elder things, or some race unknown to us?

For keepers wishing to play a *Robotech* or *Gundam*-like ultra high-tech version of Japan, see the "Dreamlands" section in the upcoming player's book for details on Kumo Marchi (Colony Five) and Mega-Tokyo.

SLITHERING ANIME TENTACLES AND CTHULHU

Mention of Japanese anime and *Call of Cthulhu* in the same sentence cannot help but evoke in some minds images of helpless young flesh and the attack of grotesque prehensile multi-tentacled abominations.

Importation of anime to North America has included many anime sub-genres. Most of it is acceptable to for family viewing, some is not. The sub-genre called *tentacle sex* has found its way to Western shores. Unprepared people who happen upon it are sometimes shocked or shaken, and wonder if this is mainstream in Japan. The answer is "no," but that bears a qualification: It is not what a housewife might sit down to watch in Japan, but tentacle sex is probably a glaring example of how different Japanese popular culture can be.

Not all of the world is based on Greco-Christian props. Asia is a Confucian-Buddhist model. That is not to say that just because tentacle anime exists, Asia is depraved. It could be argued that in the West, the mighty Zeus of the Greek pantheon was overly frisky with women in all sorts of strange bestial forms, and that most Greeks just stoically accepted it as the way the god is.

There is much speculation of where the whole tentacle phenomenon comes from. Partially it can be traced to ancient fertility festivals in the native Shinto religion where massive fifteen-foot-long wooden phalluses are carried down the streets by dozens of men to promote fertility in the rice fields. Another aspect can be traced to a less moralistic valuation of the sexual act in Japan. Like breathing or eating, it is a natural bodily function. But there can be no denying that another

FURTHER ANIME AND MANGA RESOURCES

BY JASON THOMPSON

The *Record of Lodoss War* anime series, while not a masterpiece by any standard, features a race of alien beings named the "Cthulhu" (renamed the "Chuwulf" in Central Park Media's English edition due to copyright worries). Go Nagai's *Devilman* manga and anime, while suffocated on the surface by both superheroes and Satanism, has a very Lovecraftian vision of a race of "red in tooth and claw" demons which dwelled on the earth in the distant past, and which awakens from hibernation in the present, eventually eliminating the human race. In Yoshihisa Tagami's hard-to-find manga *Horobi*, the collective unconscious resurrects archetypal gods and demons, intent on returning humanity to a state of primitive worship and fear. The manga of Junji Ito, with its squirming worms-, snake- and artifact-creatures, and overpowering inhuman forces (*Uzumaki*), shows his self-admitted Lovecraft influence. Yumi Takada's *Ah! Eve* and *Blue Seed* present an exciting pulp horror world of evil cults, tentacled monsters and Tibetan mythology. Hiroshi Takashige and Ryuji Minagawa's *Spriggan* manga and anime (the manga was retitled *Strike!* in the English version) involve an Indiana Jones-style archeological organization which protects humanity from ancient artifacts and other buried evils. The name of the organization is "Arkham" (again mistitled "Arcam" in the English version). *Iriamajo III*, a science fiction anime from Studio A.I.C., features a character named "Lavinia Whateley" (no relation) and the android "Armitage" herself (named after the professor from "The Dunwich Horror"). However, these in-jokes don't have much to do with the story. *Gernesyber* is another cyberpunk apocalyptic anime in which the title creature is created from the fusion of two psychic sisters, one a crippled genius and the other an animalistic simpleton. Hitoshi Iwaaki's science fiction/horror manga "Parasyte" involves an invasion by shapeshifting carnivorous aliens who eat human heads and place themselves on top of the bodies.

For those willing to seek out unformulated imports, the possibilities are still wider. *Call of Cthulhu*-based manga and even novels are available, inspired by the game's Japanese edition published by Hobby Japan. The manga artist and monster illustrator Kensaku Yano has written a five-volume manga based on the Cthulhu Mythos, explicitly featuring Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, Tsathoggua, *et al*. In 1994, Gakken published a Lovecraft "mook" ("movie book," or magazine book"), *Cthulhu Shinwa Taizen* (*The Complete Cthulhu Mythos*), containing interviews with Yano and other Lovecraftian writers/scholars including Hideyuki Kikuchi, Hiroshi Aramata, and Kaoru Kurimoto. Undoubtedly, closer inspection will reveal even more Japanese Cthulhu paraphernalia. (You may consider yourself a true maniac if you locate the "Necronomicon" pinball video game for the Sega Saturn!)

In live-action, *The Shadow over Innsmouth* has been repeatedly adapted for Japanese TV, and one section of the anthology film *Necronomicon* was directed by Japanese director Shunsuke Kaneko.

vital aspect is also that there are some very frustrated animators out there unable to get dates, and that they have misogynistic or even drug-influenced imaginations. From there it is merely a matter of copycat syndrome and one-up-manship.

For some mature western viewers, it can be shocking and insulting, for others funny in its abject silliness, and for some, well . . . forever burned into your memory.

The keeper must decide how (and whether) to use *Cthulhu Japan* to deal with anime and tentacle sex. Such details are inappropriate to the aims of this book. It is, however, important to let readers know that such a genre exists and that the author is aware of it as a resource—a twisted one, yes, but a resource nonetheless.

IN THE CTHULHU MYTHOS

Within the Mythos, the close proximity of the Yonaguni Monuments off Okinawa, the Plateau of Leng in China, Shamballah in Tibet, and submerged R'lyeh where the Great Old One Cthulhu slumbers has left an impression upon the collective consciousness of the Japanese mind. The confluence of all these Mythos energies filters from the subconscious into the daily world with distorted images of creatures like the Great Dragon of Mappo and Cthulhu. They find their way into unstable creative minds and extend into works of fiction and fantasy. When seen by other Japanese, such tentacle-infested works spark a deep-rooted recognition that forever lurks at the edge of their awareness.

Japan sits at the intersection of three tectonic plates, which have great potential for destruction. The archipelago will not fall like dinner plates into the sea, but there could be a great cataclysm. Does the Buddhist belief in the corrupt age of Mappo in which we now live mean that the end times are inexorably approaching? Is there a collective awareness of a timeless evil waiting to devour humanity? Perhaps that is why the Japanese have such a stoic composure about life.

Cults such as Buddha's Tears actively utilize tentacle anime and manga to recruit new people. Some people who obsessively read such material suffer a gradual deterioration of Sanity with repeated exposure, as the cosmic truth of the Mythos horror filters through. (**Optional rule:** keepers may inflict a 0/1D2 SAN loss for each week a person is regularly exposed to tentacle manga and/or anime.)

THE GREAT OLD ONES ENTER

The Great Old Ones utilize the creators of tentacle anime for several private ends.

- The avatar Chuzazin is said to manifest after a certain tentacle video tape is played 88 times (reflecting the 88 sins in Buddhism).
- Shudde M'ell, the Great Old One worshiped by the chthonians, lives in fissures of the tectonic plates beneath Japan. Its form has been seen by humans worldwide because of tentacle anime.
- Y'Golonac eagerly feeds upon those corrupted by twisted anime and especially savors the flesh of animators after they have distributed their finished work and tainted others.
- Over the centuries, martial artists and Zen masters have journeyed to China and returned with stories of the Great Old One Zhar who resides on the Plateau of Sung. An encounter with Zhar can be an ultimate test. The combination of tentacles and fighting spawned early tribal works like the *Wandering Path*. Many modern readers also have a taste for the violence-and-tentacles combination which feeds Zhar and his twin Uoigor.

Handling Japanese Investigators

"There was a Tokugawa constable from Edo whom I discovered quite upon accident was following me in my travels. I found this out mostly from his clumsy inquiries to locals. I had three options. I could do nothing and continue to evade him as I had done. Of course, I could also stop until he found me and easily slay him with my staff. Or . . . I could slowly drive him insane by leaving behind tantalizing traces of my activities. Which do you think I chose?"

—a discourse of the Black Monk with an oyabun, as related by a Tokkaido innkeeper, *The Mysterious Path.*

Because most players will probably not be too knowledgeable about Japan, it will be the keeper's job in the beginning to remind players of key cultural points. Being a patriarchal society, the keeper, clothed as a non-player character elder or a superior, might directly question an errant investigator about his actions:

- "Is this something you would do?"
- "What about loyalty to the group?"
- "If you behave that way in public, you'll shame your parents!"

That may seem quite the task, but if you have even scanned this book from cover to back, you should have a pretty good idea of what kind of emphasis to put in scenarios with a Japanese setting. Below are some quick guidelines you might find useful to keep a Japanese investigator in line.

義理

Unending Obligation (Giri)

The racial unity of the Japanese is a hindrance as well as a benefit. In addition to achieving personal goals, a Japanese investigator has to appease the required obligations to the group, and his duty to society in general.

For this reason, Japanese investigators should be *very* careful about making promises as they will be expected to uphold them—to the letter. Linked to this is gift giving; by accepting a gift, the Japanese person is also acknowledging all the debt and obligation that goes with it and so will try to repay it as soon as possible to clear the slate.

Of course, you *could* be heavy handed and use this feature of Japanese society to force an investigator into the direction you need, be it an informative encounter or deadly danger. At times, obligation can be an effective vehicle to limit the choices of the investigators when trying to steer them to a certain venue, but such tactics may begin to wear thin on players.

恥

Shame (Haji)

In most of Asia it is not guilt that stops someone from shoplifting, but shame (haji). Guilt is feeling bad for performing a deed in conflict with personal ethics that were ingrained at childhood. Shame is feeling bad for a deed, not because of your own internal value system, but dreading what others in the community might think and the resultant ostracism.

This is why corruption seems so rampant in Japan. Bureaucrats in elite positions of power feel that as long as they don't get caught, it's okay. When they *do* get caught with their hand in the cookie jar, *then* they feel shame. Haji is so humbling that they sometimes commit suicide.

A player might use this as a kind of loophole and do terrible things as long as he's not caught. What the keeper can do in this case is make sure that the player understands that violating social rules and acting shamelessly does catch up with investigators. If you have lived in an Asian country for any length of time you will realize that neighbors seem overly nosy to Western sensibilities. This is the ultimate neighborhood watch. Crime rates in Japan are among the lowest in the world, because Japan is a self-policing society. The old lady dumping bath water has one eye on you, as well as the little six-year-old pre-schooler on her way to school.

Police boxes are at convenient one-block intervals in big cities and friends or co-workers will inform on you if you don't conform to the rules. If a player character does something morally suspect and it is witnessed, those people are not afraid to walk up and confront the offender or report it to someone who *will*.

Hierarchy and Seniority

An individual's rank is very important within Japanese society. Because Japanese feel they are a homogenous race, status is vital to differentiate between people. Even the year of graduation from school establishes a pecking order in Japanese peer groups, with members younger by a few months calling their classmates *sempai* (elder). Major corporations often jockey between each other in business for the number one ranking in the industry. Ranking permeates all levels of Japanese society.

No matter how brilliant a professional is in his field, he is still expected to defer to his elders—even if they are doddering old fools. In long established institutions and in the government, the seniority system is alive and well. Ability isn't as important as number of years of the job. For investigators, this can be frustrating when they encounter a senior person who's obviously incompetent but whom they must go to first to make a request for a favor or information.

For outsiders, ranking can be an irritant but such hierarchy gives order to a Japanese's personal universe. It elicits a feeling of security because an individual knows where he or she sits in the grand scheme of things. *Knowing your place* may sound bad, but even a janitor is more at ease knowing where he stands in the social order when first meeting a stranger.

Finally, ranking affects the type of speech used in a situation. An inferior like the janitor uses deferential speech, *Keigo*, to a superior such as a salaryman and crude street language, *Zokugo* or *Zonzai-kotoba*, for someone below even him. Were the janitor to use improper deference with the salaryman, it could be seen as a gross insult.

In the same vein, if the janitor were to talk deferentially to, say, a homeless person, the vagrant might think the janitor was being patronizing.

For game purposes, investigators should recognize the importance of hierarchy, even if they don't respect the higher ranking person, and at least act like they respect him to his face. Failure to do so can cause all kinds of disharmony. Many intelligent Japanese monsters assume this ranking system, and deference to them is often the only thing that stays their hand from attacking. Disregard of this by lowly humans in the presence of such creatures can be fatal.

You might want to encourage players to speak polite English to high ranking non-player characters or powerful intelligent monsters to convey the importance of language and the figurative egg-shells walked on when parties have great disparity in rank.

Within a group of Japanese-only investigators, it might be advisable to downplay hierarchy if certain players try to use it to lord over others. Explain that everyone is within the same peer group and so are equals. They are part of the team and that supersedes relative rank. If, however, players use rank to make the game more interesting—by all means run with it.

WISDOM AND YOUTH

Since ancient times, Japanese society has been based on a Confucian family unit with the elder of the house teaching the younger and receiving respect in return. Older investigators who decide they cannot bear face-to-face tangles with Cthulhu Mythos threats anymore, but cannot fully put down the fight, stay on as aged and respected advisors. Retired investigators and active ones naturally form into *ie* (clans) and *sempai-kōhai* (elder-junior/mentor-student) relationships. The elder retired investigators are held in awe for what they have seen and done and lived to tell about. The elders also respect the younger, spry investigators for their naive enthusiasm to do something the elders can no longer do without totally forfeiting their sanity.

PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR *GETA* (SANDALS)

If you choose to play a Japanese investigator, remember that the intent of this section is to offer a CoC parallel to Western life, but through the eyes of a Japanese person. Life and death are still serious issues. After all, in the final equation, it's just the other side of the globe and Japanese are human. The way the resident culture has taught its people how to deal with the unknown is what you should be thinking about when you play. From there, the revelation of cosmic truths, its complications, and the aftermath is what further shapes your investigator's personality as you roleplay.

Get to know your investigator and understand some basics about his society's intricacies and principles and how that has made him into the person he is. Go from there to discover how encounters with the unknowable will further mold your character and allow him to grow. When called to action, you'll have a clear idea just what kind of personality has gelled and how your character would act in a given situation: significantly different from a Western investigator in some ways, yet no more different in others.

When you roleplay a Japanese, be yourself, enjoy the experience, and act it out the way you want. The real fun is letting your imagination play on all the stuff you've ever imagined the Orient to be.

Group and Self

The nail that sticks up is hammered down.
—Famous Japanese proverb.

The nail that sticks up is sharp, unseen and painful to step on.
—Demon hunter proverb.

The opinions of the group direct the ethical and moral actions of most Japanese, which is useful to remember when running non-player characters in a scenario. If the group approves, a behavior is okay; if the group frowns on an activity, a Japanese investigator, despite the fact that it feels personally like "the right thing to do," will be torn between his duty (tatemae) and desires (honne).

GOING BY THE "RULES"

All these factors function in real Japanese society as means of social control. Obligation, shame, hierarchy, and the group mentality all act on a Japanese to make him a productive member of society. Used in balance, they grease the wheels of social interaction. When a Japanese begins to stray from these important values, that individual is seen as insolent, unreliable, and unethical. He or she may even be perceived to be losing his or her sanity. Using these social rules also goes a long way in helping players running Japanese investigators to stay faithful to the feel of the setting.

When the need arises, there are times when these rigid rules can be bent or broken. By keeping them in consideration most times, and weighing *when* the best time to break them is, you can make a scenario much more rich and detailed. Such conflicts between the burden of duty and personal goals can even add a very Japanese dramatic touch now and again.

JAPANESE-ONLY INVESTIGATOR GROUPS

When all the investigators are Japanese, it does make some things easier on the keeper. By applying the aforementioned social guidelines uniformly on the group of investigators, you can quickly establish the desired mood for the game.

THE PEER GROUP

By declaring that the team of investigators is its own peer group of equals, you create a small societal in-group of Japanese within the game. This means that all work for the good of the group and have pride in their affiliation with it. Of course, there can be a Judas within the group, but such characters are usually quite adept at hiding their true motivations. Another interesting twist to consider is the consensual goals of the group ("summon the shoggoth") versus individual projects ("study 'Bind Shoggoth'") and the interesting conflicts that being out-voted can stir up.

Group loyalty within such a small tight-knit circle is often strong, overriding that to society as a whole. The level of camaraderie and sense of connection between members is unrivaled in the West. The dark side of this is that, depending on the general disposition of the group, they are capable of deeds possibly objectionable to the general public (like keeping ear necklaces of defeated monsters).

Native Japanese Character Creation

Little is altered in the core creation rules for a Japanese character from those listed in the CoC core rules. The step by step process below is simply for easy reference.

The basic characteristic rolls are the same for Japanese investigators.

1. Determine Characteristics. Roll normally and use whichever point distribution system you like best for STR, CON, POW, DEX, APP, SIZ, INT, EDU and SAN.
2. Characteristic Rolls are the same: INT x5 for Idea, POW x5 for Luck, STR+SIZ, Damage Bonus, and 0% for Mythos Skill.
3. The same applies to derived characteristic points. Hit points: (CON+SIZ)/2, magic points: initial POW; Sanity: POW x5.
4. Choose a Japanese occupation (see pages 49–52). Determine occupation skill points by multiplying EDU by 20; apply only to skills listed in that occupation. (You need not worry about Education being significantly different as the system of education in Japan is on par with Western institutions.)
5. Determine personal skills by multiplying INT by 10 and apply to any skill except Cthulhu Mythos. Note that Japanese is your "Own Language," not English. You must take English as "Other Language."
6. The section on Modified Skills can be found on page 63. New skills unique to Japan can be found on pages 63–69.
7. Allocate equipment as listed in the Japanese occupation listing chosen for the investigator.
8. Firearms are illegal in Japan (see "Legal Weapons," pages 84–86).
9. A list of common hand to hand weapons in Japan is found in the Japanese Weapons Table on page 84.
10. All Japanese have a basic 150% in the Martial Arts skill due to curricula at public schools.
11. Choose the investigator's gender. Bear in mind the difficulties and advantages it carries in Japanese society.
12. After determining gender, choose a family name and appropriate personal name from the reference tables provided on pages 48–49.
13. Note any marks, disfigurements or mental disorders that may affect gameplay.
14. Based on the final EDU score, decide on what university the investigator has attended and what degrees the investigator has accumulated in the past.
15. The character's minimum age is EDU+6. For every ten years past old as the investigator's age add 1 point to EDU and so an additional 20 points of occupation skills for each decade of life. Maximum limit or drawbacks: for every ten years or fraction above 90, subtract a point from STR, CON, DEX, or APP.
16. Choose a birthplace in Japan (see the maps on pages 70 and 73).
17. Calculate the investigator's annual income and assets. Note its annual bonus, if any, and when it arrives.

Name Reference Charts

The tables provided here are a sampling of typical Japanese names. These tables are by no means complete or exhaustive, but are intended to get Japanese investigators up and running with authentic sounding names. Guidelines for in-depth creation of names, including the meanings of Chinese compounds and family naming practices, will be provided in the *Cthulhu Japan Investigator's Companion*.

Of course, you need not limit your choice to just these tables: there are many resources, such as the Internet, you can tap for further research. Using a search engine, try keywords like "Japanese Names" or variations of such. Another option is to borrow names of famous historical or literary sources.

NAME ORDER, A QUICK NOTE

In Japanese society family names come first, given names second: Yamamoto, Hiroshi.

In *Cthulhu Japan* names are presented in the Western order for ease of understanding: Hiroshi Yamamoto.

FAMILY NAMES

Abe	Inoue	Muragi	Nakagawa	Saka	Takeuchi	Wada
Aoi	Ishii	Matsumoto	Nakamura	Sakamoto	Takubo	Watanabe
Aono	Ishiiki	Matsuoka	Nakayama	Sakata	Tanaka	Yamada
Doi	Ishikawa	Matsushida	Nemuta	Sato	Tanigawa	Yamaguchi
Eda	Ito	Miyagawa	Nishida	Sem	Taniguchi	Yamakawa
Fuji	Kakihara	Miyata	Nishimura	Seto	Terada	Yamamoto
Fujimori	Kamiya	Mori	Nishimura	Shimizu	Teramoto	Yamaoka
Fujimoto	Kanada	Morikawa	Nishiyama	Shinoshi	Toda	Yamashita
Fujita	Kanamoto	Morita	Noda	Sugimoto	Tomita	Yamauchi
Fujiwara	Kawakami	Moritani	Nomo	Sugita	Tomiyama	Yano
Furukawa	Kawanaka	Moriyama	Nomura	Sugiyama	Toyoda	Yawara
Furuta	Kawasaki	Murakami	Ochi	Suzuki	Toyoka	Yokota
Hamada	Kihara	Muraoka	Oda	Tachibana	Toyokawa	Yoshida
Hashida	Kimura	Murata	Oishi	Tagawa	Uchida	Yoshimura
Hashimoto	Koyama	Nagai	Okawa	Takada	Uehiyama	Yoshioka
Hayama	Kuroda	Nagano	Ozawa	Takahashi	Udaka	
Hino	Kurokawa	Nagata	Oshima	Takei	Uechida	
Honda	Machida	Nagoka	Oeiki	Takamoto	Ueda	
Ide	Machimura	Nakai	Ogato	Take	Uemoto	
Iino	Masaoka	Nakajima	Oniwa	Takeda	Uemura	
Ikeda	Matsuda	Nakata	Saito	Takeshita	Ufai	

FIRST NAMES: MALE

Akira	Hiroyuki	Kenji	Masahiro	Nobuto	Takahiro	Tetsuki
Akiyoshi	Ichiro	Kenta	Mitshiro	Nobuyuki	Takahuro	Toyoyuki
Daisuke	Ikuro	Kentaro	Misaki	Rikuya	Takashi	Yasuki
Eishi	Junichi	Kiyoshi	Masashi	Ryuki	Takaya	Yoshihiro
Genki	Junya	Koudai	Masaru	Ryusuke	Takayuki	Yoshinori
Gentaro	Katsuhiro	Kouhei	Mitsuyoshi	Ryuuta	Take	Yoshitaka
Haruhi	Katsumori	Kouji	Mitsuyuki	Satoru	Takeaki	Yoshiyuki
Haruta	Katsuya	Kousuke	Michimasa	Seiji	Takeshi	Yosuke
Hide	Kazue	Kouta	Munaki	Shinichi	Taku	Youhei
Hideki	Kazuki	Kouzo	Munekuni	Shinsaku	Tatsuro	Yuji
Hideyoshi	Kazushi	Kuno	Naoki	Shintaro	Tetsuhide	Yuki
Hiroaki	Kazuya	Kyouhei	Naoya	Shinya	Tomoyuki	Yusaku
Hiroki	Keiichi	Makito	Nasuhiro	Shouta	Toshiaki	Yusuke
Hironori	Ken	Makoto	Nasushi	Shusuke	Toshihiro	Yuuta
Hiroshi	Kengo	Masahiki	Nobuhide	Syouji	Toshiki	Yuya

If you allow the players to set forth several moral guidelines or general goals for the group, they should be made to stick with them or risk destroying the integrity of the circle and the respect outsiders feel towards them.

If ranking within the group is a worry, create an elder non-player character to whom the investigators answer, but is off stage unless an important decision is needed. Examples include: a rich sponsor for a private agency, a section chief who leaves the investigators to their own devices, an old relative who checks in on the group from time to time, a Zen priest who lets the group stay at his temple, a professor who monitors the group's doctoral work, or a respected mutual friend who arbitrates group disputes.

"Foreigners" Raised in Japan

Children of some foreigners have spent their entire childhood in Japan. These people are divided between two worlds. While they have a foreign face to Japanese, ethically and socially they have the mindset of a Japanese person. Most Japanese are dumbstruck when they first meet someone, not an "honored guest" like the average foreigner, who is fluent in their language and adept at maneuvering the hurdles of their society. Discrimination and uneasiness is often the result. Ironically, this Japanese-minded person reacts with the same xenophobia that Japanese have when encountering a foreigner. Other foreigners quickly lose patience with such strange people as well.

If a player wishes to run a foreigner raised in Japan, have them generate an investigator using the Japanese rules, Japanese being their primary language. English may well be a problem for them to speak fluently. They have the benefit of knowing the culture inside out, but suffer discrimination and suspicion when not in their local area. Have them suffer the same initial reactions as other foreigners in encounters, until they speak fluent Japanese, of course. But then the reactions can be more severe than to a normal foreigner. Most fluent foreigners tend to be jaded, to say the least.

Funny circumstances can sometimes arise from mistaken assumptions. Such a fluent investigator might be speaking in Japanese, but the native Japanese person might respond in English, so stunned is he at the "foreigner's" proficiency that it doesn't "click."

Society: A Final Thought

Be careful not to be too forceful or heavy-handed with these social rules, or the game becomes oppressive. Japanese etiquette should come to extremes and be burdensome only during times of war or prison internment, not in the average modern scenario. In most daily situations it shouldn't be too much of a problem for investigators. Emphasize things such as shame or obligation when it makes for good drama and conflict within the story.

If used this way, players will savor such experiences rather than learn to dread having morality thrown in their face.

Japanese Occupations

These entries represent some of the more interesting occupations that a Japanese investigator might hold. Intended to capture the flavor of the roles Japanese perform in society rather than actual job duties, the occupations listed can either be used to help mold a new Japanese investigator or create non-player characters. If you prefer a less specialized choice, occupations listed in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook can be quite easily adapted to the modern Japanese setting—keeping in mind cultural differences.

These occupation listings are really intended for the modern era. Because Japan has become an industrialized country only in the last hundred years, the character and mood of Japanese culture in the 1890s and even the 1920s setting is radically different. It is suggested you refer to information sources mentioned in the bibliography on page 343 for appropriate occupations.

Bosozoku

Wearing white hoods, carrying bats and two-by-fours, these are the disaffected youth of Japan. Like modern samurai clans, late at night

FIRST NAMES: FEMALE

Ai	Eisuke	Kana	Mari	Mamoko	Satoko	Yayoi
Aiko	Fumie	Kaori	Masaki	Nao	Satomi	Yoshiki
Akemi	Fumiko	Kayoko	Mesako	Naoka	Sawako	Yuiko
Akiko	Fuyuko	Kayo	Megumi	Naoko	Sayaka	Yukari
Arisa	Fuyumi	Kazue	Michiko	Naomi	Sayumi	Yuki
Asuka	Hana	Kazuko	Mieko	Nomi	Sayuri	Yukie
Ayaka	Hanako	Kazumi	Mitsumi	Namie	Shoko	Yukiko
Ayako	Hatue	Keiko	Mitsumi	Narumi	Syoeiko	Yukka
Ayumi	Haruka	Kiyo	Miwa	Rumi	Taeko	Yuko
Chie	Haruko	Kiyoko	Miki	Risa	Takako	Yumi
Chiemi	Harumi	Kiyomi	Mimi	Rumi	Tomo	Yumie
Chiharu	Hiroka	Kumiko	Mineko	Rumiko	Tomoko	Yumiko
Chika	Hiroko	Kyoeiko	Mio	Ryoko	Tomomi	Yumoko
Chisato	Hiromi	Mai	Misato	Sachiehiko	Toshie	Yuri
Emi	Hitomi	Maiko	Misuzu	Sachiko	Toshiko	Yurie
Eri	Hiromi	Makiko	Miyo	Saki	Wakana	Yuriko
Erika	Junko	Maki	Miyuki	Sakiko	Yasue	
Eriko	Juri	Mami	Mizuho	Sanae	Yasuko	

they drive jazzed-up motorcycles bearing gang banners from town to town, racing and revving ear-splitting mufflers.

Skills: Club, Drive Motorbike, Fast Talk, Persuade, Urban Navigation, Zoku (Gangs) and any two personal skills.

Equipment: Harley or Kawasaki motorbike, switchblade, small supply of stimulants, white hood, baseball bat, and leather jacket.

Buddhist Priest

A Japanese Buddhist priest performs funeral rites to ease the dead, and chants sutras (Buddhist holy scriptures) of Buddha's universal truths to keep evil spirits at bay. The life of a Buddhist priest is not an easy one; the day begins at sun-up with morning duties, followed the rest of the day by alternating between long hours of meditation and contemplation with daily chores using full mindfulness. At the end of the day, nourishment is a simple fare; following the Buddha's teaching to harm no living thing, Buddhist priests eat a purely vegan diet. Some monks travel into the local community with only a ricebowl begging for alms to support the monastery. An old custom, lay people donate to bring good merit/karma to themselves for these small acts of generosity. Because possessions and personal appearance are the most intimate symbols of attachment to desire, most monks have no worldly possessions; their basic needs are provided for by the temple or monastery. Buddhist priests shave their heads to part with the vanity of hair, and wear some variation of a simple black kimono with an orange sash on their shoulders. Monks have a clarity of perspective few modern Japanese citizens possess.

Skills: Cultural Etiquette, Library Use, Lore (Buddhism), Meditation, Psychology, Persuade, Shôdô, and any one personal skill.

Equipment: Kasa straw hat, tepatsu alms bowl*, five ringed shaku-jo staff*, a tome of sutras*, juzû prayer beads* and worn black cotton robes.

* See pages 146–147 for more information regarding these items.

Corporate Researcher

A team member to the core, the corporate researcher has been trained since graduating from college to set the company's priorities first.

Skills: Corporate Culture, Computer Use, Library Use, Electronics, Electrical Repair. Also choose two: Chemistry, Biology, Medicine, Pharmacy, or Physics and any one personal skill.

Equipment: Utility k-van, titanium briefcase, laptop w/iridium uplink, field sensors and gauges, geiger counter, company debit account, gray trench coat, company lapel pin, and lab coat.

Corporate Salaryman

A salaryman's only interests are his company's. He has no identity outside of the corporate pin on his lapel. Loyalty to the company is paramount.

Skills: Accounting, Bushidô, Corporate Culture, Credit Rating, Cultural Etiquette, Persuade and any two personal skills as on-the-job specialties.

Equipment: Company k-car, slim leather suitcase, company lapel pin, company debit account, box of business cards, gray or blue 3 piece suit, and conservative 3/4-part haircut.

Fu Sui Sensei

Fu Sui sensei are handsomely paid for their consultation work as many companies and local governments seek them out for advice on the most advantageous orientation and layout of new buildings and public works. Also very important are the locations of graveyards, so ancestors may rest in peace. What a Fu Sui expert does is read the dragon lines and recommend the most harmonious placement for things and people to insure a steady flow of ki in the environment.

Skills: Art (Shukô Gei/Ink Brush), Astronomy, Cultural Etiquette, Lore (Taoist), Library Use, Occult (Ryu Michi/Dragon Lines), and any two personal skills.

Equipment: Several Taoist reference books (including the *Tao te Ching*), divining rod, compass, hand mirrors, star charts, receipt book for fat bank account.

Hereditary Yôkai Hunter

As there are hereditary schools for martial arts and performing arts, those with a knowledge of the old ways pass on such responsibilities to the new generation—who often are unaware of the family secret at first. Yôkai are manifestations of evil in the land and it is a hunter's job to quietly remove these threats without the public at large knowing. They often study parapsychology to aid them in their work.

Skills: Bushidô, Cultural Etiquette, Lore (choose one: Buddhist or Shinto), Hide, Martial Arts (choose style), Occult (Yôkai), Parapsychology, Urban Navigation.

Equipment: Custom titanium katana (hidden in Buddhist shaku-jo staff*), Kevlar body armor, occult reference book, mayoke*, gohei (Shinto prayer wand)*, incense, sutras*, paper o-fuda* to put on the forehead of o-bake and bind them, long leather trench coat and boots.

* See pages 143 and 145–147 for more information regarding these items.

High School Student

With a cell phone in hand and daddy's bankcard, she can follow her hobbies with a freedom and zest that few others in Japanese society can. In Japan, school uniforms are still required by law and ALL children under 18 wear them in public. Uniforms of stylized sailor suits for girls and quasi-military uniforms for boys are commonplace sights on the streets.

Skills: Climb, Hide, Jump, Library Use, Martial Arts (choose style), Urban Navigation, Zoku (High School) and any one personal skill.

Equipment: Used utility bicycle *(mamachari)*, PHS cell phone *(keitai)*, school regulation backpack, pencil case, textbooks, print club book, baggy socks (for girls only) and two school uniforms—one summer and one winter.

Itako

Supplanted from center stage by the Yamabushi with the arrival of Buddhism in 700 C.E., they are blind female Shinto shamanesses who have been given the gift of supernatural sight for the loss of their natural ability. They serve as mediums for kami, nature spirits, and the departed to inhabit. Itako act as an interface for the public and kami-sama. They are famous for prognostication; many mothers and older people come to them for comfort. They provide the role of soothing the worries of average people about the status of their ancestors. Itako wear the white and orange kimono of a Shinto shrine maiden.

Skills: Channel Spirit, Cultural Etiquette, Listen, Lore (Shinto), Occult (Ancestors), Persuade, Psychology, and any one personal skill.

Equipment: Gohei prayer wand*, o-fuda*, mayoke*, and white cotton kimono with orange hakama skirt.

* See pages 143 and 145–147 for more information regarding these items.

Japanese Professor

Japanese professors tend to be either hard line on Western theory or enjoy delving into the romance of the ancient myths of Japan.

Professors have all of a university's resources and the high esteem Asian cultures hold for teachers at their disposal.

Skills: Cultural Etiquette, Credit Rating, Library Use, O-Keiko, Other Language, Psychology, and any two of the following as a personal specialty: Anthropology, Archaeology, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Electronics, Geology, History, Law, Medicine, Natural History, or Physics.

Equipment: Faculty car (family size), faculty ID card, leather saddle bag, several reference books, reading glasses, magnifying glass, corduroy blazer, and denim slacks.

Kotodama Master

Though far removed today from their roots in the Heian Era, Kotodama masters still wield a fair amount of power over the intricacies of the ancient written Japanese language. Today, Kotodama masters are often employed crafting talismans and curses, all with the flick of an ink brush. A Kotodama master rarely if ever wears Western clothes, mostly favoring somber gray, brown or white kimonos of a conservative cut.

Skills: Art (Shukô Geî/Ink Brush), Astronomy, Cultural Etiquette, Lore (Shinto), Library Use, Own Language, Shôdô/Calligraphy, and any one personal skill.

Equipment: A 40,000 Chinese character reference book collection (8 volumes), ink stone, silk and horsehair ink brushes, white sand, white silk kimono, lots of silk and rice parchment, and freshly blessed wood planks.

National Police Force (NPF) & Self Defense Forces (SDF)

Trained by the government, the police and SDF try to integrate harmoniously into the community, most helping society run smoothly. Every neighborhood has a police box, *koban*, which people in distress can run to, and the SDF does many community services. Nonetheless, these institutions are the reminders of an older military society so modern members are extremely careful to express the right image to a wary public. These are the only sectors of society allowed legal access to firearms and military equipment. Their uniforms make them easily identifiable.

Police Skills: Bushidô, Fast Talk, Grapple, Law, Martial Arts (Kendô), Psychology, Urban Navigation and any one skill as a personal specialty: Bargain, Drive Automobile, Handgun, Ride, or Spot Hidden.

NPF Street Officer Equipment: 9mm revolver (damage 1D10, base chance 20%, range 15 yds, attacks 1, bullets 6, malfunction 00), telescopic baton (damage 1D4+db or stun, base chance 25%, range touch, attacks 1), 2-way walkie-talkie (9 mile range), 12 bullets, police ID badge, handcuffs, halogen flashlight, police vehicle (subcompact car or motorcycle), access to police database, handbook of ordinances and regulations and navy blue uniform.

NPF Riot Control: Pepper spray (damage stun, base chance 25%, range touch), 1 tear gas grenade (damage stun, throw %, range 4 yds, attacks 1/2, malfunction 98), full riot gear (8 HP), riot shield (5 HP) and black uniform.

SDF Skills: Bushidô, First Aid, Hide, Listen, Mechanical Repair, Rifle, Sneak, and one skill as a personal specialty: Computer Use, Electronics, Operate Heavy Machine, Pilot, Pilot Ship or Submachine Gun.

SDF Infantry Equipment: M64 assault rifle (7.62mm x51mm, damage 2D6+3, base chance 25%, range 90, attacks 2 or burst, bullets 30, malfunction 96), camo web gear (canteen, GPS, medical field kit, rain gear, 3 rifle clips), camo kevlar helmet (5 HP to head), camo high impact body armor (12 HP to chest), night vision goggles, SDF ID, and camo olive green & beige fatigues.

Radical Ultra Nationalist *(Uyoku)*

Brandishing bullhorns and rising sun armbands, uyoku are easily spotted in loudspeaker vans blaring out nationalist slogans as the vans slowly roll down the streets. Honestly believing that their motives are pure, they desire a golden age again for Japan—if only all the foreign corruption would leave. They draw funding from the underbelly of Japan, the Yakuza.

Skills: Cultural Etiquette, Drive Automobile, Fast Talk, Persuade, Psychology, Zoku (Yakuza) and any other two skills appropriate.

Equipment: Mini-van painted with the rising sun logo and 4-way loudspeaker mounted on top, tapes of extremist slogans, butterfly knife, Yakuza phone contacts, WWII era uniform and bullhorn.

Shinto Priest *(Kannushi)*

Kannushi, priests of the native Japanese religion who deal with *kami* (spirits) of powerful ancestors and, effectively, the gods who watch over the welfare of the Japanese people. Shinto priests deal with services that promote life. They are often in the community performing blessings for newly born children and the opening ceremonies for new buildings. Shinto priests also organize annual *matsuri*, festivals, and community groups. Shinto priests wear the black cap of their station and pure white kimonos.

Skills: Craft (Shrine Charms), Cultural Etiquette, Lore (Shinto), Occult, Psychology, Shôdô, and any two personal skills.

Equipment: Shrine register of names of all local residents around local shrine, gohei prayer wand*, o-fuda*, mayoke*, white cotton kimono and black hat.

* See pages 143 and 145–147 for more information regarding these items.

Taoist Alchemist

Pursuing the long and risky endeavor of seeking immortality for often questionable reasons, most alchemists do not mix well with everyday society. Often it is the firm adherence to the Confucian strictures on social behavior that prevents an alchemist from becoming completely detached from his humanity and sanity. Second only to his quest for immortality is his perceived role within society and his duty to it. The alchemist is very rank and class conscious; he is naturally deferential to superiors but just as belittling to inferiors. It is for these reasons the alchemist often performs in the esteemed role of a traditional Chinese medicine healer and herbalist in a community, which allows him to go undetected amongst the populace and yet still pursue his obsession unchecked. Alchemists wear the black cap and blue gown of a Chinese Taoist priest.

Skills: Chemistry, Lore (Taoist), Oriental Medicine (any two), Martial Art (Tai Chi), Occult (Taoist Alchemy), Philosophy (Taoist).

Equipment: Collection of Taoist texts, herbalist shop or acupuncture clinic with hidden alchemy workshop, chemicals, potent herbs, rare objects.

Yakuza

The crime syndicate of Japan, they rule all the underworld rackets of Japan with little opposition except by upstart Korean gangs. Highly

traditional in some ways, they still use Bushidô as a creed, but in other ways are also very pragmatic and modern. The average Yakuza is a lieutenant on the street, often employing illegal immigrants and gang members to do his dirty work, leaving no trace to the Yakuza leaders except "clean" and legal operations like pachinko parlors. All Yakuza bear body tattoos as indicators of rank, and pledge allegiance to their oyabun, the "grandfather." They are recognizable on the streets by their punch perms and sunglasses.

Skills: Bushidô, Conceal, Fast Talk, Hide, Persuade, Psychology, Urban Navigation, Weapon (Melee or Handgun).

Equipment: BMW/Mercedes vehicle, pachinko parlor, butterfly knife, small handgun, protection payment list, and *yukata* summer kimono with wooden *geta* shoes.

Yamabushi

Existent since around 700 C.E., Yamabushi are specialized Buddhist mountain ascetics. Practicing esoteric Buddhism through obscure chants, charms, and extreme physical hardship, they acquire magical powers with the intent to benefit the community at large. Loosely associated with the *Tendai* and *Shingon* sects, shugensha are renowned for exorcisms and martial arts skills. Making regular pilgrimages to the highest and most remote sacred mountains in Japan dressed in their very distinctive outfit, little has changed for the Yamabushi. These mountain monks do not take on the trappings of modern society, preferring instead to spend hours in rigorous ascetic rituals chanting under icy waterfalls.

Skills: First Aid, Geology, Lore (Buddhism), Martial Arts (Bo-Ken), Navigate, Occult (Demons/Ghosts), Spot Hidden.

Equipment: Fez-like black hat, globe necklace, five ringed shaku-jo staff*, animal skin backpack/bedroll, tome of sutras*, juzu prayer beads* and worn white cotton robes.

* See pages 146–147 for more information regarding these items.

Handling Foreign Investigators

Nippon: Land of the Rising Sun, since the dawn of time has been a place of unsurpassed beauty and the unequaled spirit of its people, the Nippon-jin. It is little wonder that for so many eras wave after wave of barbarian invaders have attempted to land on our shores and harvest this prosperity.

—Passage from the *Shintsu Taizen*.

Many players will wish to bring in continuing investigators or even create a non-Japanese investigator from scratch. These investigators are considered foreign by Japanese citizens. Even a person of Japanese descent but born in a different country falls into this category.

Reasons for Coming to Japan

There can be many reasons for an investigator to decide to come to Japan. Here are a few plausible ones for keepers wishing to interrupt the lives of foreign investigators and move the action to Japan.

A VACATION WITH A SURPRISE

1. An investigator decides he needs some rest and relaxation. Japan sounds as far from Mythos-related trouble as possible. Little does he know...
2. Investigators win free tickets to Japan. The contest seems a bit contrived if they look into it; otherwise they will probably expect a wonderful sightseeing break in the Orient.

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION BUREAU

Legal Last Name _____ Legal First Name _____ Middle Name _____

Nationality on Passport _____ Place of Issue _____

Passport Number _____ Exp. date ___/___/___

VISA TYPE

(Please check only one)

❑ Tourist, 3 mo. ❑ Educational, 12 mo.

❑ Working holiday, 12 mo. ❑ Employment, 12 mo.

❑ Cultural activities, 6–12 mo. ❑ Perm. resident, 36 mo.

Residency Status _____ Resident Card # _____

Date of Entry into Japan ___/___/___ Renewal Date ___/___/___

Japanese Sponsor (Name and Address) _____

_____

3. Mistaken identity. On vacation, the investigator is mistaken for another foreigner. And if the resemblance isn't close? Well, most foreigners look alike to Japanese anyway. . . .

CURIOSITY

1. The investigator has always been fascinated by Asia, and decides to take an excursion to Japan. This can be simple sightseeing or an educational sabbatical.

2. A seminar or conference is being hosted in Japan. Curious, the investigator sees the opportunity to go to Japan with all expenses paid, as "business," as the chance of a lifetime.

VISITING FAMILY OR FRIENDS

A good friend or family member is already living in Japan and invites the investigator over for a visit:

1. While showing the relaxing investigator the local color, tragedy strikes and now the new arrival is hot on the trail of a murderer, either of the loved one or a bystander.

2. The investigator is traveling the countryside and by chance witnesses a Mythos event of significance. This encounter drives the visitor to delve into the issue further.

3. The invitation seems harmless enough, until the loved one, trusting no one else, finally decides to show the investigator a Mythos-related item or piece of knowledge.

4. The investigator's loved one asks them for help. Their son/daughter has fallen in with a cult, *Buddha's Tears*, and they don't know who else to turn to.

RESEARCH

1. An important find has surfaced in Japan. Local facilities have been set up, but they need an expert in the field to man the labs.

2. The underwater ruins near the main island of Okinawa have gained the attention of an institution that wants its share of the pie. It will sponsor the investigator and a hand-picked team in exchange for rights to any finds and credited articles in any journals.

3. The investigator has found an archaic tome inscribed in *kokuji* (old) Japanese in another country. After some quick inquiries, the best place to conduct detailed deciphering of the work is found to be at Japan's Tokyo University.

AFFILIATION WITH AN ORGANIZATION

1. A multi-national organization is opening a branch office in Japan and asks for the investigator's help to train the core staff.

2. The investigator is flown in to do consultation or translation work on a project.

3. The investigator is flown in purely for publicity, either to endorse the institution or to promote a product.

ON THE LAM

1. The investigator is incognito. He's trying to lie low from his enemies or the law and Japan seems as far away as possible from old troubles.

LENGTH OF STAY IN JAPAN

Before getting to the task of chasing down fading tomes or stopping insane cultists, there are several practical considerations for foreign investigators that normally don't come into play for native investigators.

One of the most pressing problems is how much time a person has in Japan to complete an investigation. Upon entry into the country, usually via Narita Airport in Tokyo or Kansai Airport in Osaka, a new arrival must declare the type of visa they plan to stay on in Japan along with the appropriate supporting documents. If approved by immigration, a large stamp listing the expiration date of the visit will be imprinted on the visitor's passport. Certain visas carry a higher status in the eyes of the rank-conscious Japanese and color how a "guest" is treated by average Japanese people.

TYPES OF VISAS

On page 52 is a box listing the different types of travel visas that allow extended stay in Japan. The options and technicalities convey a small taste of the difficulties the semi-closed Japan still offers. It might be useful for investigator and keeper alike to keep track of the period of stay in Japan and the problems that arise when foreigners overstay their welcome. The trouble renewing a visa when there has been a history of run-ins with the local authorities can make for interesting roleplaying.

TELLING THE TRUTH . . .

It might not be wise to tell the immigration official that the purpose of your visit is to:

". . . dispatch the dark servitors of the squid god Cthulhu back to the slimy pits of Hell from whence they slithered forth."

You might just make that official's day, if he or she understands English that is. More likely, you will find yourself in a nice cozy seat on a plane back to the country where weirdoes like you come from.

Therefore, it is recommended that an investigator choose one of the more . . . standard . . . answers: sightseeing, work, education or cultural studies.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations in Japan can either be quite easy to obtain, or extremely difficult, depending upon what you intend to do during your stay.

SIGHTSEEING/WORKING HOLIDAY

Hotel **3,000–40,000 yen/day**

For the vacationer, it is quite simple to rent a hotel room. There are many types and levels of quality available in Japan.

Homestay **free**

For those desiring interaction with Japanese and wishing to experience the culture first-hand, homestays are the way to go.

Zen Monastery **free**

You will be expected to perform all daily duties and observances as the resident Japanese priests, living humbly and simply.

Youth Hostel **1,200–5,000 yen/day**

Usually only found around popular attractions, youth hostels offer cheap accommodations.

EDUCATIONAL

Dorm **200,000+ yen/semester**

Dorm rooms can be quite nice or ramshackle, much like university dorms in the West.

WORKING

Gaijin Hotels **10,000 yen/month**

Not really hotels, these are usually old rundown apartment buildings just barely maintained at minimal municipal housing codes.

Company Dorm **20,000 yen/month**

These are living residences provided by larger companies for their employees.

Mansion Apartment **20,000+ yen/month**

In some districts of Japan, it can be notoriously difficult for a foreigner to secure an apartment on their own.

Legal Difficulties

Occasionally, the problem of breaking the law arises. Thankfully, swift samurai justice and lynch mobs are a thing of the past. If for any reason, a foreigner is caught doing something illegal, the local police have three options:

1. **Warning and Placed in a Sponsor's Charge.** Lenient, it is reserved for minor crimes and foreigners who have been members of a community for a long time. They are released from custody into the charge of a Japanese "sponsor" who is considered responsible for the actions of the lawbreaking visitor. The visitor is treated as if a child again. Considered an embarrassing punishment from a Japanese perspective.

2. **Deportation.** For serious crimes, it's considered "going easy" on the offender. The lawbreaker must pay for his own ticket; barring that, a party at the destination country is required to pay the transport fee. Someone so expelled from the country can never reenter Japan. Legally, that is.

3. **Prosecution.** Prison in Japan can be very harsh. Prisoners are guilty until proven innocent and have NO RIGHTS. Much like boot camp, prisoners' lives are highly regimented and discipline is paramount. Often they are put to work doing some form of manufacturing work but with no wage for long hours every day. After serving a term for the crime, foreigners are then deported.

INTERROGATION

Before prosecution, Japanese police will hold a suspect in a jail cell nicknamed the "bird cage," a cell with bars on all four sides, no walls, and no privacy. Cameras are trained on the suspect 24/7. Police will not allow the suspect to sleep and continually take them into a room where the officers mercilessly cross-examine and psychologically intimidate the suspect. This continues for hours, days or weeks until the suspect cracks and confesses, whether they committed a crime or not. From this point, the accused is taken to the court system for prosecution. Tales abound of wrongly accused individuals confessing to a crime to be free of the mental stress this style of interrogation incurs.

CULTS

Then there is the problem of cults. Foreigners are at a distinct disadvantage here. Members of cults, often natives, can blend into the local scene. The foreigner sticks out right away. If an investigator tries to respond to an attack by a cultist, all eyes are on the foreigner, not the Japanese.

On the other side of the coin, if a foreigner becomes involved with a cult, they will be considered a prize catch and be jealously guarded by other cult members. Escape or rescue of such members is all but impossible.

MYTHOS ENTANGLEMENTS

What makes it interesting is the cultural and legal hurdles an investigator must negotiate to get the job done. Both keeper and investigator should keep in mind what the repercussions might be for any drastic or highly visible action against a Cthulhu Mythos threat. Also, how might a Japanese interpret the experience with their own cultural filter?

Foreigner Occupations

While foreigners only make up less than 1% of the Japanese population, there are common occupations that they take on while in Japan. These occupations are intended for use in the creation of a new foreign investigator or to give a continuing one an excuse to be in Japan.

Bartender/Hostess

This is a job for risk takers and the young. While it is a legal job, Japanese perceive such people as being in the lowest of professions.

Skills: Craft (Bartender/Hostess), Disguise, Dodge, Fast Talk, Listen, Other Language (Japanese), Psychology and any other one preferred skill.

Equipment: Passport, bartender's guidebook, a few pieces of jewelry from admiring regulars, little black book of contacts and friends, and evening dress or tux.

College Student

Treated quite well by the Japanese, these are undergrad and graduate exchange students studying anywhere from three months to five years on a cultural visa.

Skills: Library Use, O-Keiko (choose one), Other Language (Japanese), Psychology, and any three skills as a major field of study.

Equipment: Utility bicycle, book bag, student ID, meal plan card, textbooks, mini-compass, student rail-pass, city map and train routes, laptop computer, PHS cell phone, blue jeans and cross trainers.

Corporate Transplant

This is an individual hired by a foreign branch of a multinational Japanese company or a foreign employee from a foreign company apprenticing in a field.

Skills: Accounting, Computer Use, Corporate Culture, Credit Rating, O-Keiko, Other Language (Japanese), Persuade and any one skill as an on-the-job specialty.

Equipment: Company k-car, resident card, leather briefcase, box of business cards, corporate credit card/expense account, sub-laptop w/ modem and 3 piece suit—gray or blue.

English Teacher

Excepting tourists, teaching is by far the most common job held by foreigners in Japan. It's not unfair for a Japanese to assume that a foreigner living in Japan is a teacher.

Skills: History, Listen, Own Language (English), Persuade, Psychology, and any three personal skills.

Equipment: Mountain bike, resident card, backpack with the week's lesson plans and teaching materials, ATM card, address book with students' names, discount card for department store, handheld electronic Japanese-English translator, red ball pens, and for clothes: white shirt, tie and Deckers.

Foreign Correspondent

Usually working for a bureau of a major publisher or media outlet, correspondents act as the eyes and ears of their country by reporting back to the home office.

Skills: Cultural Etiquette, History, Library Use, Other Language (Japanese), Own Language, Persuade, Psychology, and any one skill as a personal specialty.

Equipment: Moped, resident card, press pass, palm-sized CCD digital camera, laptop w/modem, digital cell phone, notebook of contacts and leads.

Illegal Alien

Maybe smuggled in for menial labor to support their family back home, or perhaps staying beyond a tourist visa to pick up a job, they live in Japan on the edge. Such foreigners are in Japan illegally and are deported if caught as such.

Skills: Bargain, Disguise, Fast Talk, Hide, Listen, Sneak and any one personal skill.

Equipment: Letters from home, roll of hidden money to send home, satchel w/personal effects, and old clothes.

Military Personnel

With the large US bases in Okinawa acting as a staging point for any potential conflict in Asia, there are a fair number of US military personnel in Japan.

Skills: Dodge, First Aid, Hide, Listen, Mechanical Repair, Rifle, Sneak, and one other skill as personal specialty: Computer Use, Electronics, Operate Heavy Machine, Pilot, or Submachine Gun.

Equipment: Military ID card (access to commissary and non-sensitive base areas), camo pants, drab olive shirt, flat top and an attitude.

Cultural Considerations

The western character, the Japanese Language, it brings with power for it is the sacred language of the gods. Learn to utilize it, perfect it, learn the true name of a thing and you gain ultimate power over it. Statesmen and oni alike will bow at your feet for you know the darkest secret in the universe: the power of naming. The craft of Kotodama.

—*Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama.*

The Language Barrier

A big obstacle for foreign investigators is that of language. Except in Australia and certain progressive school districts in the US, Japanese is seldom part of the pre-university language curriculum. This means few if any foreign investigators are going to be chatting understandable Japanese in their spare time before they encounter this setting. However, there are a few believable ways to get around this without using the "universal translator" cliché from science fiction and still keep the game moving along. Bear in mind that this refers mostly to spoken communication. Learning to write the two thousand odd Chinese kanji characters is a whole different story.

Translation and Research

Frustrating for the foreign investigator is to be a hand's breath from a veritable fount of Mythos knowledge and yet be crippled by language deficiency. Having to depend upon intermediaries and others for translation can also be a hassle. Add to that the Byzantine structure of most Japanese institutions, and you have the prescription for an investigator taking up a violent recreational habit for relief. Sanity checks aside after filling out forms in triplicate, this is part of what makes the Japanese environment great. It's overcoming these hurdles that can make present day Japan a fun romp for the keeper.

Mixed Groups of Investigators

A group of foreign investigators intermixed with Japanese ones shouldn't present too many difficulties. At least, you shouldn't allow it to interfere with the flow of gameplay.

The Japanese Investigators

On the Japanese side of things, while it is true that the foreigners are outsiders, they are also part of the Japanese person's in-group. Therefore, they become like family and the Japanese investigator is more comfortable around them and less guarded than to, say, a total stranger. At times, the behavior of the foreigners bewilders him or her, but the Japanese person tries his or her best to accommodate them. He or she will even overlook what could be considered very insulting/embarrassing situations if it were another Japanese person. Difficulties frequently arise when the Japanese person does favors, just behaving normally based on his culture, and the foreigner doesn't reciprocate. There also comes a time when a Japanese person feels that the foreigner has had more than enough time to acclimate to the culture and should "know better." Whether this is the case or the foreigner really is clueless is another matter.

The Foreign Investigators

Foreign investigators have the wonderful benefit of having an interpreter, cultural guide, and maybe even somebody to teach them a bit of Japanese. Foreigners shouldn't abuse this, however, as even helpful Japanese have a breaking point. Foreigners shouldn't be ogres and use their foreignness as an excuse to be asses. If they are doing so they are just plain rude and probably in culture shock. Foreigners should make an attempt to learn about the culture they are in and be sensitive enough to understand that it is *they* who are the interlopers. If foreigners just act like themselves and adapt to the new challenges, mixed groups can be highly beneficial.

Keepers should also try to avoid letting teams of investigators polarize into "foreigners" and "non-foreigners." They should point out that the group members are all friends or at the very least professional colleagues. All but the deepest of cultural differences can be put aside, and the team can get to the work of saving the world from itself.

文化シャク

Culture Shock (Buka Shoku)

When I arrived in Nihon, my greatest shock was the food offered by my gracious hosts. My second shock was when the food tried to squirm away.

—Lafcadio Hearn, *Supernaturalia Japonica.*

Culture shock is something every foreign investigator has to deal with in some form or another when visiting Japan.

Culture shock, or CS, is much like a weaker form of the stress-induced illness PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder. While nowhere as debilitating as PTSD, culture shock can throw the foreigner for a loop when he or she least expects it. CS tends to invoke mild forms of anxiety disorders or xenophobia. CS has a nasty habit of building up under the surface as more life threatening things demand attention. It's when things calm down and the person wants to relax that the CS whammy strikes.

The worst thing about the ordeal is that a foreigner has no perspective concerning the degree to which he or she is affected, or if CS has happened at all. If arriving at the same time in Japan with a group of fellow foreigners, all will be suffering the same stages of CS. Unless another foreigner in a different stage of CS is observed, a person may not be aware of *why* he or she is irritable. Or the person simply might get complacent and think, "Ah, good thing that's not me!"

By itself, CS should never be totally debilitating—just an annoying irritant. The only circumstance in which CS should be serious is when it's in the severe stages and in conjunction with a failed Sanity check. Another instance might be when the foreigner is also suffering from other bits of psychological baggage like phobias or anxieties.

Remember, CS is the constant stress of being in an unfamiliar environment. This never goes away unless the person leaves the environment. Old Chinese water torture works on the same principle: one drop of water doesn't hurt anybody, but a thousand, thousand drops can drill a hole through a skull.

To reflect that CS tends to be worst when it acts cumulatively with other problems in life, the keeper, at his or her option, can do the following:

1. When a situation in a scenario calls for a Sanity check and the roll is a failure, add +2 to the final sanity point loss. This is the toll CS exacts upon the victim. In addition to confronting a sanity-rattling event, the investigator is already in the throes of severe CS, which further weakens his mental fortitude. This two-point penalty might be a meager thing, but not if the investigator is standing on the beach stressed from CS and Cthulhu comes lumbering out of the sea.

Example: *Running for his life, Harvey in a panic stops and asks an old Japanese woman if she has a phone so he can call his friends. In his state, it doesn't register that he's asking in English. The woman just looks at Harvey bewildered. The woman's reaction adds a surreal atmosphere to the already horrifying image of seeing Larry's skull pulped by an oni. On any other day, Harvey would just be annoyed by this little incident, but today it's icing on the cake: he loses it totally. Harvey's player must roll 1D6 SAN loss and then add +2 for CS. He rolls a 3 and then adds +2, so his final Sanity loss is 5 points.*

2. CS tends to follow a cyclical crest and wave level of intensity. For the investigator new to Japan, the first couple of cycles of CS can be quite bumpy. Each cycle takes longer to complete, indicating the mastery a foreigner is gaining over his stress in Japan.

Within each cycle are eight stages. Investigators should travel through the eight stages of CS when they encounter new situations in their environment. (See "The Eight Stages of Culture Shock" chart below) Upon reaching stage eight, they should advance to the next cycle indicated in the "Timeframe for Cycles of Culture Shock" chart, below.

Timeframe for Cycles of Culture Shock

Cycle of CS	Onset
First	can occur in a matter of hours.
Second	a span of days.
Third	a number of weeks.
Fourth	months.
Fifth	seasons.
Sixth	things rarely bother you.

The Eight Stages of Culture Shock

Stage One, Amazement. "Wow, look at all the strange symbols on the signs; they're so exotic looking!"

Stage Two, Open-Mindedness. "I should learn to read these signs if I'm going to live here."

Stage Three, Oversimplification. "Well, I know the kanji I need to get to work, that's enough . . ."

Stage Four, Frustration. "I'll never learn all these kanji!"

Stage Five, Shutdown. "To hell with this! I'll just memorize my route to work!"

Stage Six, Indifference. "Let's see, left and then right onto the highway."

Stage Seven, Acceptance. "Well, if I'm going to function I HAVE to know kanji. "Sigh*"

Stage Eight, Return to Stage One. "Wow, look at all the strange symbols on the signs!"

Suggested Stage Five CS Disorders

Addictions: excessive smoking, drinking of alcohol.

Anxieties: motor tension, autonomic hyperactivity, expectations of doom, panic disorder.

Moods: depression.

Phobias: agoraphobia, claustrophobia, demophobia, ichthyphobia, phagophobia, scnophobia.

When an investigator reaches Stage Five, call for a Sanity check. If the roll succeeds, they proceed into the recovery (stages 6–8). If the roll fails, they stay in stage five and acquire a mild anxiety or phobia related to Japanese daily life. Roll again each time they encounter that situation. Note: failed checks simply means the person stagnates in stage five.

At the keeper's discretion, if the investigator stays in stage five too long (say three failed checks) he or she can start to develop physical stress symptoms like ulcers, nervous tics, low immunity to colds and flu, depression, and such.

If you wish to have a record keeping system for CS, try the following one or whatever else suits you:

The keeper draws a box like the one on this page and puts a hash mark down for an investigator every time in the game he or she encounters a cultural situation that confounds him or her.

The first column is for investigator names. The second is hash marks, each representing a stage of culture shock—when five is reached, a check is made. The third column records a failed roll, for which the player and keeper should choose a phobia or anxiety for the investigator. Multiple failures on different cycles indicate additional anxieties or phobias. The final column indicates how many cycles of CS an investigator has endured.

After becoming acclimated to similar things the intensity of CS should lessen. After the fourth or fifth cycle, it takes a great deal to shake up an investigator. Discard this system if it becomes too cumbersome, as the time frame for progression between stages on the chart is a crawl.

Culture Shock Chart

Name:	Stage:	Roll Failed?	Cycle #
John	■■	no, 52	2nd
Larry	■■■■■	yes, 51	1st
Lou	■■■■■■	yes, 42	3rd

精神病

Mental Health (Seishinbyô)

"The mind is a fragile house. Do not take refuge in it. It is built on pillars of illusion, doors locked to cosmic truth. Strengthening the walls is futile for it will fall apart even more quickly when the first great wind of Mara batters its supports and shatters its windows. Walk outside of it. For reality is not within, it is beyond understanding."

—Shâkyamuni Buddha on his deathbed.
The Forbidden Sutra

Coming from a differing culture as they do, Japanese for the most part are going to react to mental stress in ways unlike their Western counterparts. Despite the fact that Japanese investigators are just as human and frail as their Western friends, they are more apt to develop different mental illnesses in response to attacks on their mental integrity. Japanese, because of cultural conditioning, are especially susceptible to certain illnesses. Anxiety and mood disorders are common mental ailments; rarer are impulse control disorders, but when they do occur they can be doubly debilitating. In addition, there are several mental tics and disabilities unique to the Japanese environment, like *karoshi* (see page 60). That is not to say that Westerners cannot suffer from these conditions, but when they do it's because they have lived in Japan for such a long period that they have adopted the Japanese cultural mindset.

Expressing Emotion

Many Japanese, due to the way they are raised, find it difficult to openly express their feelings. Japanese society suffers from what could almost be termed mild collective autism. In a situation where the average Westerner might experience an emotion like anger or happiness, his face will involuntarily mirror this internal sentiment. At times, when face is called for, it can be a hindrance broadcasting your feelings to the world, but it is also a healthy psychological outlet.

Due to considerations of the group (tatemae and honne as well as other factors), a Japanese who is angry and one who is happy will both have the same stony mask on their face. This isn't intentional and doesn't mean that Japanese are by nature a cold people. In fact, they are just as hot-blooded and passionate as Westerners. It's just that they have been culturally conditioned not to express these emotions in public. Such outbursts are seen as childish: there is a time and place for everything.

By the reckoning of adults, if you express your emotions outwardly, another Japanese in your group will perceive this to be a request and seek to be of service. So, unless you wish to incur debt, on, to a fellow group member, you keep your emotions to yourself.

To openly express *every* emotion that you experience and especially to get angry openly, makes you look foolish to Japanese eyes and respect for you lowers appreciably. This unconscious attitude even carries over to foreigners in general, who more often express how they feel openly, and so many Japanese perceive foreigners in general as being a bit childish. On the flip side of anger, Japanese are also suspicious of the person who is always smiling; in Japanese society smiling doesn't necessarily mean genuine happiness but sometimes hides deceit or embarrassment. Pleasantly smiling foreigners might be perceived as hiding something, rather than just having a naturally sunny disposition.

There is a point where all this unexpressed emotion reaches a cracking point and mental disorders begin to manifest. Victims often suffer from addiction or anxiety disorders. So long has a stricken Japanese suppressed emotions, the ordinarily stony mask of a person with anxiety will possibly develop a constant nervous facial twitch as the only outlet for the illness.

JAPANESE COMPOSURE

To their merit, most Japanese can face a great deal of adversity and show no outward effects, at least not immediately. Surprisingly, this can be a problem: as their culture expects them to keep emotions pent up so as not to display anything inappropriate, feelings begin to fester under the surface. Eventually, a limit is reached where the façade cracks and emotions burst out in an uncontrollable torrent. It is then the Japanese investigator will run screaming in terror. (Ever watch *Godzilla*?) In dangerous situations, naturally the survival instinct kicks in, but if the threat is not obviously and immediately life-threatening, some Japanese can show a calmness and cool surprising to outsiders.

That is not to say that they're not quaking in their sandals on the inside, but their well-trained tatemae is providing them with some level of outward calm to fall back on.

If a keeper wishes, this calm (called gamman, *or endurance) can be reflected by rolling a 1D8 multiplier to delay the effects of mentally debilitating Sanity checks. It may take a while for the person's composure to crack under the strain.*

When a Japanese person does crack, the response is usually worse than a Westerner's loss of control. This can be a scary thing about a Japanese character on the edge of sanity. Even his best friends might think everything is okay after that brush with an oni. It's not until late that night, when Taro jumps on the table bellowing and gesticulating with a knife in his hand, that his friends realize their mistake.

GROUP-THINK

Another consideration is group mentality. If a Japanese investigator is in a group of peers, he is likely to have greater fortitude resisting mental difficulties, so assured is he by the approval and emotional support of his comrades. This is a side benefit of being raised in a culture that stresses group cooperation and that puts the interests of the group before the individual.

There is a limit. A group can set internal standards and ethics that the individual might not agree with on some level, but would never think of contesting openly.

There are many episodes in Japanese history where groups of Japanese have done ugly things that individual persons would never consider. A Western parallel might be mob mentality, but in Japan, group-think is much more structured and easier to slip into. This is why cults and, in the past, military movements, form so quickly and successfully in Japan. Even today an observer can see groups of identically dressed students doing baseball-training drills that look chillingly like military exercises, though the participants would not even realize the resemblance.

In game terms, when a Japanese is in a group of peers and is confronted with a Sanity or POW check, a keeper can optionally reduce the loss/cost by 1D4 points. This symbolizes the fortitude and security that the group gives to the mind of the Japanese investigator and the blunting of the attack on the mind's perceptions.

This can also work in reverse, for if the group as a whole looks like it's about to bolt from a threat, even the most confident and sane individual in the group will be rattled, much more so than a Western investigator raised on being self-sufficient. Add an additional 1D4 Sanity loss in such situations.

EATING DISORDERS

Japanese culture has a strange propensity for tasting things. A Freudian might say that they have a definite oral fixation. In most cases, it can be as harmless as the Japanese penchant for cuisine that foreigners find repulsive. The more exotic the dish, the more desirable to the Japanese palate. Among things commonly ingested in finer Japanese restaurants are raw squid, jellyfish, octopus, sea urchin, snail, and horsemeat. Exclusive, invitation-only specialty restaurants offer the fatally poisonous puffer fish, *fugu*, which is filleted so as to retain just enough poison to pleasantly numb the lips and tongue when dining. The rich have been known to secretly host annual parties where the main course is an endangered species.

When a Japanese person becomes mentally ill, this taste sometimes strays to the more bizarre and taboo. Some individuals will experiment with toxic materials or excrement.

It shouldn't be surprising that, in the past, during times of war where the moral compass of the group as a whole was skewed, there were numerous reports of voluntary cannibalism of prisoners by Japanese officers.

As a keeper, you might find this sort of disorder troublesome for a hapless investigator. It might well hamper gameplay and detract from the main scenario. Unless, of course, you wish to add a unique (ahem) flavor to your game.

It is suggested that the most extreme eating disorders only be inflicted on cultists and borderline non-player characters. The goal is to evoke a mood of horror and repulsion at the depths these "humans" have sunk to.

Phobias and Tics

So many Japanese have certain phobias and physical tics that they might well be classified cultural conditions rather than mental illnesses. Other phobias, which might just be mildly inconvenient in other countries, can be highly debilitating for a Japanese trying to function in his society.

The following phobias are not often seen:

Claustrophobia—is less common, due to a cultural sense of security in tightly packed spaces.

Entomophobia—the fear of insects is uncommon, for many Japanese gain an affinity for bugs as pets from youth.

Ichthyphobia—fear of fish is also less common considering the amount eaten in the Japanese diet.

Thalassophobia—fear of the sea is rare and incredibly debilitating considering that Japan is a series of islands and most land masses are no more than a short drive from the sea.

Phobias more likely to be encountered in Japan:

Agoraphobia—the fear of leaving home afflicts many older Japanese and middle-aged housewives.

Androphobia/Gynephobia—fear of males/fear of females seems to be mildly present in youths, who shun the opposite sex until university where they finally get a chance to socialize in mixed gender groups. Until then, many activities and events naturally separate youths into same-sex groups.

Demophobia—fear of crowds is ironic, considering the high population density of Japan.

Ergophobia—fear of work. Some salarymen who have breakdowns acquire this phobia. In youths, a variant of this is appearing: a fear of school and the stresses of tests and bullying. Students often cease to attend school as a result.

Necrophobia—the fear of dead things is quite pronounced in Japanese culture. It is deep-seated due to the long influence of Shinto and Buddhist views about death. The dead are an impurity and both religions regard any impurity as horrifying. The reason for the untouchable class, the *burakumin*, is that their ancestors handled "dead things"—animal hides, hunting, burials, etc.—all the worst of impurities. And so by extension, this is why necrophobia is terrifying to Japanese.

Spectrophobia—fear of ghosts is also a borderline phobia, as many Japanese are still quite superstitious. Even mentioning the subject can elicit chills and nervousness.

Culturally Specific Mental Illnesses

Chin Liao said:

"Dis-ease is often the symptom of societal ills. Understand the people to know its ills. But not to conquer them; do not confront. Instead be not there. Do not resist. Save energy for true darkness. The Tao dictates that Dis-ease is the least of mankind's problems."

—Chin Liao, *Tao of Immortality: Analects of the Void.*

KAROHSHI

Karohshi, literally "death by overwork," is a condition acute to the Japanese workplace. While the term karohshi describes the final result of this illness, it also includes the process of obsessive workaholic behavior and accumulating stress that finally does in the victim.

This mental illness is most problematic in the environment of the middle class salaryman. The post-war generation collectively worked hard, scrimped, and saved to make Japan the economic giant it has become today. To achieve this, a different work ethic developed than in the West. Even now, many major corporations and multi-national conglomerates require Japanese workers to sacrifice their own ambitions for the greater good of the company. The result is salarymen working seventy or more hours a week. With the much esteemed Japanese composure (as well as the group pressure to endure), the salaryman ignores the pains and aches of his body and pushes on: getting up at five in the morning, working late into the evening, then going to parties for clients, and finally getting home past midnight.

The estrangement of his family because of his schedule and the generally thankless work he does, leads to karohshi, an extreme form of workaholic attitude mixed with typical Japanese self-sacrifice. What eventually happens is that the morning office workers arrive at work to find a pasty white corpse hunched over at his desk, pen still in hand.

Karohshi can be a very real danger for Japanese investigators within a group setting focused by an intense work ethic, or for a single determined investigator researching a problem.

As a keeper, you might want to warn a player that his investigator is feeling the strain of all those long nights of research, but also emphasize the deadline and urgency of the investigator's mission. This shouldn't surprise the investigator, though. Occasionally mention that the investigator might be pushing himself or herself too hard. Also suggest that the obligation to complete important work cannot be ignored. Don't spell out the danger, but present the factors in this ultimately dangerous equation.

After several weeks or months, this abuse takes a toll on the investigator. Secretly roll against his or her CON x5. If it fails, secretly subtract 1D4 from total CON. The player should not know of this lost CON as long as he or she continues to drive the investigator past normal limits. The investigator's maximum CON is reduced, and it will not recover except with bed rest and light activity equal to one week for each CON point lost.

To give fair warning, let the investigator suffer general fatigue, muscle pain, and cramps at inopportune moments as a clue to the developing condition but never let on what the cause is. If the investigator continues to ignore his body and reaches zero CON from this self-abusing behavior, he suffers a stroke or heart attack and dies.

Nothing is as tragic as an investigator whose consuming obsession fatally erodes his health, killing him at his desk rather than in the field, because he refuses to give Mythos problems an occasional vacation.

XENOPHOBIA (GAIKOKU KIRAI)

Extreme xenophobia is so prevalent in Japanese citizens that it might be considered a social condition rather than a phobia. Certainly, the high-strung mannerisms and nervous quiver which a xenophobic Japanese exhibits when encountering a foreigner sets the average Westerner to thinking that Japanese as a whole are an odd lot.

This phenomenon is mostly caused by fear of being put into a situation where a Japanese believes he or she will be expected to speak English. Most citizens receive 4–8 years of English in the public school system, but because of the way it is taught, only a rare few have passable conversational ability.

In addition, Japan hosts so few foreigners that most Japanese have no previous exposure to foreigners. When a Japanese takes a chance and gets beyond all the strange fairy tales built up in their minds over the years, he or she adapts fairly quickly to the presence of the stranger. Some annoying xenophobic behavior always seems to show through the behavior of the older generation, though, so ingrained is it for them.

Keepers can use this behavior when Western investigators encounter non-player characters in rural Japan. A mild Sanity check (0/1D3) might be in order for the non-player character if the foreigner isn't accommodating to this xenophobic behavior. A Sanity check is definitely in order if the investigator is blatantly aggressive. Sometimes, though, nothing the foreigner does can help extreme reactions by self-consumed Japanese: exposure to outsiders basically shatters the character's perception of his or her safe, comfortable little world and he or she flips out.

TAIJIN KYOFUSHO

Meaning "face-to-face," this psychotic disorder is a form of anthrophobia. It is an intense anxiety in the presence of other people; there is fearfulness that your appearance, odor, or behavior is offensive to another. It seems to arise due to the high population density of Japan and the groupthink conformity of the society.

HIKIKOMORI

In the last decade, *hikikomori*, which translates roughly as "to withdraw from society," has become an increasingly conspicuous phenomenon in mainstream Japanese culture. Since the turn of the twentieth century, Japan has been in the process of continually reinventing itself. Under this crushing wheel of progress there are bound to be . . . victims. As is common when any culture undergoes upheaval, various new and peculiar neuroses appear in the aftermath. Hikikomori is an individual psychological reaction to the tremendous economic, technological and cultural change Japanese society has undergone in the last few decades.

Who Is to Blame?

While no one is certain, many theories abound for the uniquely Japanese ailment of hikikomori. Are the dual forces of consumer culture and the Information Age stripping away the need to interact with fellow humans? This mental illness may be the result of the toil of two previous generations of Japanese who struggled to rebuild Japan after World War Two, leaving a generation of beneficiaries with great wealth and opportunity but no clearly defined direction. Today, well-to-do Japanese lack the imperative and the work ethic to rebuild a nation like their forefathers; modern youth have no clear mandate for a lifestyle. Add to that the intense peer pressure during the schooling years in Japan where they are compelled to fit in, to conform, and to undergo the stress of "exam hell." All of these social elements serve to alienate many Japanese people with less than aggressive dispositions. Having nowhere else to turn, they choose to go inwards, to withdraw from an exquisite pain: the yoke of expectation the outside world has placed upon their shoulders. Turning their backs on sunlight and companionship, hikikomori cloister themselves away. And because of skyrocketing real estate costs, the children of most Japanese families continue to live in the same household even many years into adulthood, parents supporting them unquestioningly.

Modern Japanese conveniences only serve to compound the situation. There is a tug of war going on in public attitudes about hikikomori. On one hand, citizens bemoan that their children are socially withdrawn; on the other hand, everyone raves about the coolest gizmo produced by Yotsubishi or the latest GameStation. The integration of cutting edge technology into every facet of Japanese life makes it possible to work at home, buy food and consumer goods on the Internet, enjoy entertainment through numerous personal electronic devices—all without ever leaving the comfort of one's own room.

The Hikikomori Tribe

Hikikomori are those Japanese young people who have chosen to withdraw from the painful experience of social interaction. A staggering number belong to this tribe today, easily exceeding one million souls. Having no discernible physical ailments, they are nonetheless socially handicapped. Two telltale symptoms are dropping out of school or quitting a job to lessen outside contact and the related chances of humiliation. Devoid of human contact, illness quietly suffocates the victim; the mind feeds on its own fantasies. Never leaving home, the hikikomori avoids contact with other human beings, succumbing to a paralyzing fear that discourse may at some point lead to personal embarrassment. For some, it is a phase, a depression that they pull themselves out of weeks or months later. For others, it leads to years, even decades, of isolation.

The Dark Side of Hikikomori

This illness is not always as straightforward as mere social withdrawal into a room to watch TV and play video games. With no social barometer, no balance provided by peers, it is perhaps no accident that the most violent and horrendous crimes committed in Japan in recent years have been by hikikomori. Some of the most shockingly ultra-violent and explicit scenes in the world can be found in Japanese anime videos and manga. One of the most horrifying examples includes the "Otaku Murders," where a teenage boy kidnapped and executed four girls all aged around five years old; he was reportedly reenacting episodes from his anime collection. Then there is the Japanese boy who killed people on the street unobserved and then hid to watch the commotion when the bodies were found. There was the news item of a nineteen-year-old woman who fled her captor's house; she was kidnapped by a hikikomori when she was age nine and held captive for ten years. In international news was the bus hijacking in Hiroshima by a deranged young man with a knife. He killed one passenger and wounded six more before being subdued. Finally, in recent news is the story of a boy who snuck into a home and attacked all six sleeping family members, killing three. There is one thing in common with all of these uniquely disquieting crimes: they were all perperrated by hikikomori.

Japanese experts have suggested several solutions. One approach includes a drastic restructuring of the existing school system, which stresses success on entrance exams over social skills and creative thought. Another is to take a hard line with hikikomori and force them to undergo psychological counseling and forced reintegration with society. Are hikikomori just "bad seeds" as some claim or are they symptomatic of a much deeper problem in modern Japanese society?

Cthulhu Sushi: Sadô, Tea Ceremony — by Jason Chan

Attitudes about Mental Illness

Eight is the number of passion. Eighty-eight the number of ignorance. One hundred and eight the black sins we partake on the path to hell. And one is the number of insanity, for it is alone and uncounted. Beware of numbers for they bear with them whispered secrets and forbidden promises. Never assume things are as they seem. Take care, it is numbers which will be Humankind's undoing.

—Black Arts: Craft of Kuwabara.

Attitudes are changing in Japan, but the truth is that most Japanese do not know how to deal with people with disabilities, be they mental or physical. While there are always exceptional people, a general public tendency exists to shun the impaired and to become shocked when forced into confrontation.

This prevailing attitude may come from the concept of purity put forth by the native religion of Shinto. Kami will bestow blessings only upon the purified. Anything that is less than whole in the eyes of the Japanese gods is impure, dirty, and a risk of contamination. Impurity can also attract evil spirits. In the old days, this restriction included avoiding people who had just been to a funeral, as well as women in menses. Modern Japanese will scoff if asked if this is the reason why they shun the mentally disabled. But the revulsion is on some level probably attributable to this as well as other, less enlightened, reasons.

INSTITUTIONS

While the quality of care in mental institutions in Japan is respectable, the treatment is quite clinical and cold. Prisons, where people are ostracized due to family shame, are warm and fuzzy in comparison. Only the most devoted relatives and friends go to see the mentally ill, so the chance of recovery through the warmth of loved ones is quite slim. Progressive and groundbreaking psychological treatment methods are also uncommon. Perhaps the only area where the Japanese excel in the field of treatment is the application of drugs.

PRIVATE CARE

The harshness of institutions, as well as the shame of having a member of the family who is less than a complete person, leads many families to care for the mentally ill at home. To Japanese eyes, this has the benefit of a family environment and the ability to limit family embarrassment from public exposure.

The down side is that sometimes the group-think of family or clan isn't always what's best for patient. There are extreme cases of ill people becoming the family secret and being hidden in a closet or a basement. In other situations, the ill person seems quite normal and the family environment has done much to heal his anguish, but anything beyond daily routine might set off this type of ill person—even a friendly visit from a neighbor. And of course, the family is not going to tell anyone of the ill person's medical history. Quite frightening and unexpected events can unfold when the family tries to cover up a mental illness from outsiders and the disabled person has a relapse in mixed company.

Skills in Japan

Jack of all trades . . . master of none.

—Full saying of a popular Western proverb.

Most of the standard skills listed in the *CoC* core rules can be applied to the Japanese setting without much modification. Those skills that might bear some tweaking for Japan are noted in this section. Note that almost all new skills and modifications are designed with a modern Japanese urban setting in mind. In depth explanations, expanded detail and further skills will be provided in *Cthulhu Japan: Investigator's Companion*.

Skills Table

MODIFIED SKILLS

Art (05%)
Credit Rating (15%)
Drive Automobile/Motorbike (20%)
Machine Gun (01%)
Martial Arts (15%)
Occult (05%)
Other Language (01%)
Own Language (EDU x4%)
Rifle (25%)
Shotgun (30%)
Submachine Gun (05%)

NEW SKILLS

Bushidô (10%)
Channel Spirit (05%)
Corporate Culture (15%)
Cultural Etiquette (15%)
Geomancy (15%)
Lore (10%)
Meditation (05%)
O-Keiko (05%)
Oriental Medicine (25%)
Shôdô (05%)
Shukô-gei (05%)
Urban Navigation (10%)
Zoku (Gen. 05%/Spec. 20%)

Modified Skills

ART (05%)

In all aspects, the mechanics of this skill are identical, but also include arts traditionally thought to be Japanese cultural assets. Japanese arts include—

- Aesthetic: sadô (tea ceremony), ikebana (flower arranging), bonsai (art of miniature trees), shiki nowa (rock garden design).
- Musical Performance: koto (harp-like stringed instrument), shamisen (sitar like stringed instrument), shakuhachi (bamboo flute), taiko (drums).
- Performing Arts: noh (classic plays), kabuki (stage theater), bunraku (puppet theater), odôri (dance).
- Literature: haiku (poetry), sumi-e (ink wash art), ukiyo-e (woodblock prints).

CREDIT RATING (15%)

Due in part to the long standing Confucian ethic of filial piety deeply ingrained into the Japanese society, Credit Rating is not quite so cut and dried as in a Western setting. But like the West, a Credit Rating in Japan allows panhandling a loan from a bank or business, or even bluffing past a demand for credentials. In fact, with a solid Credit Rating, people are less likely to scrutinize the investigator unless cause is given, in contrast to a Western situation.

In Japan, Credit Rating also holds the definition of how prosperous and confident an investigator seems to be. This is tempered however by societal ranking, favors owed, personal reputation and monetary worth, in that order. Losing rank can be much more detrimental than financial ruin in Japanese society.

Despite the fact that Japan is a modern country, society still tends to be close-knit in its structure, much like a small community—what group you represent and if you have courted or done a favor for another party in the past all hold weight. This is why salarymen are constantly wining and dining potential clients after hours to build a familial and trusting bond.

Senior leaders of the community have high Credit Ratings due to numerous favors owed them over the years, personal prestige from job affiliation and age. However, if a scandal strikes and causes loss of face or even ostracism, Credit Rating can plummet. Younger people must rely on affiliation with a prominent company or institution for a respectable Credit Rating.

Foreigners are at a disadvantage in that they must function at the lowest rank in society and must build up other areas to have a respectable Credit Rating. At the keeper's option, foreign investigators can be handicapped 5–20% for their first couple of years in Japan.

DRIVE AUTOMOBILE/MOTORBIKE (20%)

With narrow roads and the motto "smaller is better," citizens are as likely to own a moped or motorized bike as a car. Apply this skill to all such motorized vehicles.

MACHINE GUN (01%), SHOTGUN (30%), SUBMACHINE GUN (05%)

Weapon possession of any type is illegal in Japan, ballistic weapons doubly so. Attempting to acquire illegal drugs is much easier than firearms and that's not saying much as drugs are not a widespread problem.

If a keeper allows the machine gun skill to remain on the investigator sheet, the player should have a valid reason for this skill. Perhaps the investigator is a police officer, a member of the SDF, or went to the US to practice at shooting ranges. A suggested replacement skill would be a melee weapon as martial arts weapons are allowed in Japan if the owner has a valid permit.

MARTIAL ARTS (15%)

The Martial Art skill has been modified for present day Japan. For an in-depth explanation, see the section "Budô: The Japanese Martial Arts" on pages 66–69.

OCCULT (05%)

Knowledge in this skill applies to occult knowledge from Buddhist, Taoist, Shinto and folk sources. Most Western occult knowledge is of the store-bought variety. Otherwise, the skill is unchanged.

OTHER LANGUAGE (01%)

Often, this is English in the Japanese setting. All Japanese have rudimentary ability in English, but it is often of the written variety. This is because English is part of the core curriculum of Japanese public education, but its use seldom extends beyond basic greetings in daily life. Otherwise, this skill is unchanged.

OWN LANGUAGE (EDU x4%)

This is Japanese language for native investigators. Note that while literacy in Japan is near 98%, the multiplier is x4 rather than x5. Written Japanese is a language with two syllabic scripts and 2,000 Chinese kanji ideograms to learn for base proficiency, making it one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn. Only written Chinese is harder with its varied dialects, intonation and 20,000 kanji characters.

RIFLE (25%)

This skill is unchanged in ability but strict permits are required to own a rifle, which is to be used expressly for hunting purposes. Only bolt-action rifles and shotguns are legally available for sale in Japan. See purchase prices on page 82.

New Skills

The skills listed here are unique to the modern Japanese setting. Obviously, some can be adapted to other settings and certainly other time periods in Japan. Common sense applies: Bushidô is appropriate for 1890s Japan, Corporate Culture is not.

BUSHIDÔ (boo she doe)—THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR (10%)

A skill of mental discipline and ethics, Bushidô is a life philosophy to adhere by. Its vital elements include *meiyo* (personal honor), *chû* (loyalty or duty), *akirame* (endurance), *ki* (spiritual energy), and *kan* (sixth sense).

The more skilled in ability, the firmer the investigator's belief in Bushidô, and the more rigidly it must be followed to maintain prowess. On the flip side, however, Bushidô gives an investigator an inner reserve of fortitude and reason in the face of danger or certain doom. It also fosters a shrewd business sense.

Typically, a person can roll Bushidô to try to see through deception such as given by the skills Bargain, Credit Rating, Fast Talk, and Persuade. Both parties roll their skill; the lower percentile roll succeeds. If the Bushidô skill wins, then the investigator sees through the opponent's ruse and possibly guesses underlying motivation as well; the opponent's skill is negated.

If the investigator is skilled in a specific martial art, one-half of his or her Bushidô skill percentiles can be added to the martial arts skill in times of extreme stress or need, to reflect the mental discipline of the person.

Optional: If a temporary insanity result is rolled, the investigator can attempt to call upon his discipline in Bushidô to keep his wits—a successful Bushidô roll will negate it. This only works once in a given scene or scenario.

CHANNEL SPIRIT (05%)

In the shrines with only shrine maidens as virtuoses, priests act as channels for the kami to inhabit and proclaim their will and wisdom. This can be dangerous, as the person has no control over the possession; they must depend on the kami to be benign, and to release the body after the session. It's probably for this reason only specific kami are invoked again and again.

With this ability, a person can try to be a receptacle for a spirit of any type to speak through. This spirit can be a dead person, a kami, or even a non-terrestrial being. The channeler will name the entity contact is desired with and go into a trance for 3D6 minutes. After spending 1 ki (magic point), and rolling his or her skill roll, the keeper determines if the spirit has come through for the channeler. Note that a 96–00 on the roll is a catastrophic failure and something else comes through other than the desired entity. Upon arrival of an entity, the channeler may also have to roll an appropriate Sanity check for mentally contacting that creature.

A character with this skill can also perceive an astral serpent (see pages 248–250) after making a successful skill check.

CORPORATE CULTURE—KAISHA BUNKA (15%)

Investigators conversant in this skill know the ins and outs of the corporate world. You understand corporate etiquette, corporate structure, what strings to pull to get things done, who's on top and who's out of favor. It allows an investigator to quickly cut through the monolithic bureaucracy and red tape and get what is needed. Time for processing paperwork, official documents, legal matters, permits and licenses is halved.

This skill's percentile rating can be combined with Credit Rating when the need arises. The combined rating can only be applied in the corporate setting; it holds no water in daily interactions.

A must for any salaryman who doesn't want a window seat his whole career, knowledge of Corporate Culture is also advantageous for promotion prospects. Aggressive corporate officers also practice Bushidô in conjunction with Corporate Culture for effective business negotiations.

CULTURAL ETIQUETTE—SAHÔ (15%)

Over the centuries, the social rules for Japanese culture has developed into tangled customs, convoluting conventions and contradicting traditions. Traditional etiquette is all-inclusive on aspects of behavior and attitude, leaving nothing to chance. Conforming to this sternly stylized way of behavior consumed much of the people's energy and spirit in the past. Today, even native Japanese find themselves attending polishing schools and taking manners courses in university in order to become refined members of society. The higher echelons of Japanese society, the learned, rich, royalty, and powerful encourage their children to learn cultural etiquette. The ambitious study it on their own accord.

- Basic levels of this ability enable a person, foreign or Japanese, to avoid serious social blunders—like wearing bathroom slippers to the dinner table or invoking Shinto deities over rice by impaling it with chopsticks.
- Medium levels of etiquette mean the person is able to conduct polite greetings, introductions and farewells; speak basic *Keigo* (honorific language) to greet guests and customers; as well as understand the social structure of traditional Japanese society.
- High levels of Cultural Etiquette allow an investigator to speak flawless Keigo to show deference to superiors; act as a traditional go-between in disputes, business unions and marriages; manipulate the traditional social structure for a desired result; and show the proper decorum at the dinner table with the emperor. Those seeking further social refinement also study traditional Japanese Art or Craft skills.

It's much easier to gain information on, say, a vital piece of a Mythos mystery if your interviewees aren't giggling in their miso soup at some social blunder you have made while trying to ask a serious question. Information flows much smoother when you act within social norms.

GEOMANCY (15%)

With absolute quiet and 3D6 minutes of careful calibration of Eastern astrology charts for the location, the user is able to sense the most harmonious arrangement of a structure or system. Conversely, he or she may also sense when something is wrong or out of place and pinpoint it with a reasonable degree of accuracy and suggest a remedy to restore ki flow.

With divining tools and a Geomancy skill rating of 35% or more an individual can find human remains, underground streams of water and mineral deposits. At a skill rating of 45% or higher the geomancer can detect disembodied or invisible entities (including astral serpents) or a power nexus/rensa. At 65% the individual can detect extraterrestrial beings or deep underground dragon lines. (In the case of dragon lines, an individual may utilize other means to tap into this limitless source of energy.)

LORE (10%)

This skill, similar to the Occult skill, applies to a specific school of Asian thought. An investigator first must choose a particular type of Lore they are knowledgeable in: Buddhist, Shinto, Taoist, or ancestor worship. A person with Lore is familiar with the general precepts and dogmas, ritual practices, and the associated accoutrements of that belief system. They are also aware of various related myths, old wives' tales and legendary artifacts. In addition, a particularly successful check allows them to extract a bit of esoteric knowledge possibly connected obliquely in some way to the Cthulhu Mythos. Those with high ratings in the Lore skill include priests, religious scholars, and authors.

For investigators and keepers wishing to roleplay out the background this skill awards, see scroll 1, section 3, "A Dark Perspective," for in-depth summaries of each belief system.

MEDITATION—MEISÔ (05%)

Vital to the process of contemplation and removal of worldly attachments, Meditation helps people to center themselves and quiet the mind. This skill must be practiced at least two hours daily for any benefit. Investigators should choose a particular style of Meditation: Zen, Walking, Chanting, Cleaning, Kundalini, or Tantric.

Optional Rule—Idea and Know Rolls: A failed Idea roll or Know roll can be retried after the person sits in meditation ten minutes for each 5 percentiles by which he or she failed the roll.

Optional Rule—SAN Loss Reduction: Those with high skill (45% reduce SAN loss rolls due to being centered, as shown in the table below. (For instance, a 1D4 SAN loss becomes a 1D4–2 SAN loss for a character with Meditation 65%.)

Skill %	SAN Loss Reduction
45+	1
65+	2
85+	3

Optional Rule—Meditation and SAN Recovery: For a patient who is non-psychotic, directed meditation by a person with Meditation 65% or higher can be used as a form of therapy, to make the mind whole again. For recovery of Sanity points, meditation must be undertaken in a daily regimen of at least two hours a day, in a peaceful setting. Each week, roll D100 equal to or less than the patient's POW x5 or the instructor's Meditation skill, whichever is less. A successful result restores 1 Sanity point. A result of 96–00 means that the meditator has caused the patient to meditate upon the true nature of reality rather than becoming whole. The patient suffers a loss of 1D6 Sanity points, coming closer to cosmic enlightenment. Meditation can also be used to mellow out phobias and mild disorders, but the same risks of Sanity loss apply.

Reading Karma: A Buddhist priest or yamabushi, due to extensive study of sutras, is able to gain a general idea of the ignorance (bad karma) and enlightenment (good karma) in himself and others, through 2D10 minutes of meditation after exposure to the target, and a successful Meditation skill roll.

A character with this skill can also perceive an astral serpent (see pages 248–250) after making a successful skill check.

O-KEIKO (kay co)—AESTHETIC ART (05%)

As an extension of the Bushidô ethic, samurai were expected to round out their martial skills with character building practices. This polishing and cultural refinement by learning traditional arts is called *o-keiko* and is still practiced today.

Traditional arts that fall under the umbrella of O-Keiko include sadô (tea ceremony), shôdô (calligraphy), ikebana (flower arranging), koto (harp-like stringed instrument), and shamisen (a sitar like stringed instrument). None of these arts have any tangible product except to please the sensibilities of the onlooker. Learning an aesthetic or athletic skill is encouraged by companies and institutions for cultural refinement.

Note that an art learned for the purpose of O-Keiko is different from someone trained through the traditional ie system for a traditional art or craft. Those seeking refinement through O-Keiko often go to a commercial school that teaches an art, but mastery in such a rookie career environment is impossible. At the keeper's option, arts or crafts taken for the purpose of O-Keiko can never exceed 65%. A serious student can always seek out a master sensei of an art to acquire further ability—this should be role-played out with the Traditional Art or Craft to be invested in.

Japanese wishing to fit into society will have at least some training in an aesthetic art and a fair knowledge of Cultural Etiquette as well. In fact, the two can be added together to reflect a person's refinement and class in the eyes of Japanese. Optionally, O-Keiko can substitute for a low ability in social skills.

ORIENTAL MEDICINE (25%)

Specialties Include: Hari (acupuncture), Shiatsu (acupressure with no needles), Moxa (burning herbs on needles), Kusuri (herbs—oral and topical).

Unlike Western medicine, which is still only several hundred years old, Eastern medicine has been practiced for three millennia. In that time, practitioners have gained an intimate understanding of the living human system. Illness in one part of the body stems from imbalance in the whole organism. Sickness is treated with the aim of curing the complete system, both biological and spiritual, as the two are inextricably linked. Taoist belief holds that the forces of nature can be divided into five core elements, each with distinctive and unique properties, both physical and spiritual, and each blending into the next in an endless cycle: water, wood, fire, metal, and earth. It is the interaction with the other elements and temporary intermingling or opposition which produces detrimental effects in the universal lifeforce, the ki. When an element appears out of balance, it's merely at one of its polar extremes. Left alone, all elements swing like a pendulum to the other extreme, oscillating back and forth until balance is once again attained. Most often, the intervention of freewilled beings out of synch with nature usually upsets this balance. Each form of Oriental Medicine attempts to rectify energy or ki imbalances in the human body and thus restore good health. Acupuncture, acupressure, and moxia all use energy nexuses on the body, pressure points, to relieve or increase the flow of ki to that part of the body. Herbs are categorized by the one or more predominant elemental energies they contain and by how these energies influence the human energy system. Overlapping complimentary Oriental treatments may prove doubly beneficial to the patient: acupuncture combined with a regimen of herbs is a common practice. It's up to the keeper whether such overlap speeds healing or even doubles the overall benefits of the treatment. Keepers can use Oriental Medicine treatments in lieu of, or in addition to, standard Western medicine treatments.

A session of Oriental Medicine by a skilled practitioner (45%+) to realign the patient's ki can have wondrous effects, healing 1D4 hit points or restoring 1D4 Sanity in 1/2 the normal time. A highly talented person (65%+) can heal 1D6 hit points or recover 1D6 Sanity in 1/4 the normal time. A master (85%+) can perform miracles in the eyes of Western doctors.

SHÔDÔ—CALLIGRAPHY (05%)

Essential to the mastery of written Japanese is the art of calligraphy. This involves the careful use of a bamboo or wood brush tipped with animal hair to write complex Chinese characters, kanji. High proficiency in this skill shows a great degree of hand-eye coordination and muscle control. Each stroke and lift off from the paper is paramount in the art of Shôdô.

With this skill, a person gains a bonus to his or her Japanese Language skill equal to 10% of the Shôdô skill.

The student has a chance equal to 10% of his or her Shôdô skill to correctly guess the meaning of an unknown kanji when first encountered.

A character with Shôdô 60% or better can craft charms and wards if he or she chants the proper rites while writing.

SHUKÔ-GEI—TRADITIONAL ART OR CRAFT (05%)

Traditional Japanese arts and crafts are grouped together under one skill because both are defined as successful works by an essential criterion: *shibui*. The goal of an art or craft is to produce a work that is steeped in shibui, restrained and highly refined beauty of classic simplicity. Within the concept of shibui are *myo* and *yugen*. Myo is the "spirit" of a work that goes beyond technical mastery, yugen is the expression of that mastery and the subtlety that lies beneath the surface of a work. Achieving aesthetic mastery (75%+) is reflected by a product of one's efforts: it is a perfect example of a particular art as well as a unique mirror of the creator's inner self.

The old *ie* family system governs traditional Japanese institutions like arts and crafts. For investigators, this means that in order to learn an art or craft properly they must find a master or *sensei* who is a member of an accepted school. Self-training is simply not done.

Upon joining the school, they essentially become apprentices who are expected to follow the orders of superiors without question. This is to learn the mindset and philosophy of that school and, by extension, the art. When close to mastery of the skill (65%+), the sensei will teach the loyal and dedicated student secret techniques known only to members of that school that can give an edge against outsiders. Upon achieving mastery (80%+ in the skill), investigators may choose to try to form their own school and face all the establishment hurdles that it entails.

Arts

The Aesthetic: sadô (tea ceremony), ikebana (flower arranging), bonsai (art of miniature trees), kare-san-sui/ishii niwa (rock garden design.)

Musical Performance: koto (harp-like stringed instrument), shamisen (sitar like stringed instrument), shakuhachi (bamboo flute), taiko (drums).

Performing Arts: noh (classic plays), kabuki (stage theater), bunraku (puppet theater), odôri (dance), geisha (singing).

Literature: haiku (poetry), sumi-e (ink wash art), ukiyo-e (woodblock prints), shôdô (calligraphy).

Crafts

Shiki (lacquerware), nihon-to (swordmaking), yohgyô (ceramics), ningyô (dollmaking), kimono (traditional attire), orimono (weaving/textiles), washi (natural paper).

URBAN NAVIGATION (10%)

As most of modern Japan is urban sprawl, this skill can be applied for negotiating through the confused and winding back streets of a city, which rarely has any posted name for reference. Users of this urban skill can interpret spider web like streets on typical Japanese city maps. Another use of this ability is to understand the myriad routes and schedules of the public transportation system and successfully utilize them. **Optional:** keepers can grant different base skills based on population density: 20 percentiles for metropolitan areas, 40 for cities, and 80 for small towns and surrounding regions.

ZOKU (zoe coo)—SUB-CULTURE (GEN. 05%/SPEC. 20%)

This is the unique etiquette and rules of the *zoku*, the tribes or sub-cultures that wander the streets of Japan's vast urban sprawls. The rules outsiders follow are nothing like their mainstream elders'. This is your reputation among the Japanese youth/underworld element and other more bizarre groups. Credit Rating and Social Etiquette are of no interest to the zoku crowd; they are already outsiders to mainstream society.

With this skill, you know where to go for insider news on all the latest happenings, who's on the top of the heap, and you can pass for a member of that group. Like Credit Rating, the higher the Zoku percentile the more of a reputation and respect among that group you have. A successful Zoku roll might elicit aid from that group, a failed roll a sound thrashing. Asking around or negotiating with successful skill checks can also get you connected with the right crowd . . . or the wrong crowd with failed checks.

Choose one sub-culture or group to identify with:

Bosozoku: motorcycle gangs.

Burakumin: the caste-less, untouchables.

Clubbers: regulars who frequent clubs and bars.

Chimpira: street toughs/gangs.

Gaijin: foreigners.

Otaku: "fanboy": ultra-geeks of any hobby.

High School Kids: sailor suits, baggy socks and cell phones.

J-Pop: trendy fans of Japanese pop culture.

Ike Ike Onna: women of deep tans, day glow clothes & silver lipstick who date Yankees (see below).

Ronin: drifting wanna-be students.

Yankees: blond haired youth, who do construction.

Yakuza: the Japanese Mafia.

Budô: Japanese Martial Arts

For centuries, martial arts has been an integral part of Japanese society. The samurai elite, the warrior class, developed practical martial skills for their duties as retainers, which were later organized into institutionalized arts of war. However, the peasant populace was not allowed to bear arms during the hundreds of years of military rule by the shogûnate for fear of uprisings. Undaunted, covert groups secretly developed numerous skills of unarmed self-defense amongst the commoners.

In the Edo Period, in addition to academic subjects, warriors were required to learn six martial arts: archery, fencing, firearms, horseback riding, jûjutsu, and swordsmanship. These six, together with military strategy, were dubbed "the seven martial arts." These were taught under the philosophy of Bushidô, the way of the warrior.

After the Meiji Period, martial arts were changed drastically to reflect that they were no longer needed for live combat and were no longer the exclusive privilege of the warrior class. The arts were renamed *budô* or "the martial way."

Today they are still widely practiced for recreation, fitness, moral training, mental discipline and spiritual fulfillment. Many Japanese train in a chosen martial art from an early age, practice it as part of the standard curriculum from junior high school, and even enjoy it into adulthood. Within the formal schooling of Japan, budô fulfills the role team sports do in other countries.

A base 15% in the Martial Arts skill (for Japanese investigators only) reflects this edge of former training.

AIM OF MODERN BUDÔ

Modern budô seeks the development of skills through physical exercise and objective standards for skills by providing competition opportunities. In this sense, it can be considered a form of sport, but budô also contains layers of philosophical thought from Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Japanese martial arts first developed as *ways*.

VIOLENCE & SANITY

If a martial artist revels in violence and constantly prefers hard style attacks that maim or kill rather than merely stop an attacker, other Budô practitioners might rightly feel that that person has fallen from the path of the intent of budô. Some budô masters will even seek out what they consider martial artists insane with blood lust and cull them from the gene pool as a threat to the harmony of budô. Musashi often performed this service in his era. A keeper might want to call for a Sanity check if an investigator continually abuses a budô art for the express purpose of cruelty and slaughter—that person has stepped over the accepted bounds of budô and is thus insane.

skills for killing, but have been transformed into serving a higher purpose due to soul-searching by modern budô masters. Masters today focus on the nature of the heart, called *kokoro/shin* in Japanese. They hold that the heart transcends victory or defeat. This philosophy blends Buddhist attitudes of life and death with the Confucian way of natural harmony and pliancy, *yawara*. An extension of this philosophy is the great emphasis on practicing courtesy in all budô: whenever opponents meet they stand facing each other, gaze into each other's eyes and bow. Dedication is another desired quality; the foregoing of sensual pleasure and desire for spiritual and physical perfection is an admired trait in budô circles.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF TECHNIQUE

The basis for martial arts lies in posture and body movement. The fundamental postures are standing upright and sitting upright, which are expressed as "natural" body positions in jûjutsu and "no stance" in swordplay. These two postures are considered proper etiquette and thus help form a correct overall attitude toward life. Yoshida Shonen stated that "ceremony is defense." Musashi Miyamoto added that it is important "to make your daily self your martial self, your martial self your daily self." These principles illustrate the essence of today's Japanese martial arts.

BASE MARTIAL ART SCORE

To use a martial art skill, just write in the preferred fighting style under Martial Arts on the character sheet. On the foreign investigator sheet (i.e., the standard sheet from the *CoC* core rules), base score is 5%.

For Japanese investigators, the base Martial Arts score is 15%. Note that an investigator can be trained in several martial arts but each one requires investment of experience and skill points to improve, unlike the general Martial Arts skill.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

Note that each martial art style utilizes certain moves that requires competence in one to three basic physical brawling skills such as grapple, punch, kick or dodge. Minimum amounts in these skills are required to take the specialty style. What the martial art does is teach a pupil how to synthesize the various instinctual reactions like a block or punch into a coordinated martial skill to efficiently defeat a foe. Required prerequisite skills are listed in each Martial Art style. The keeper is encouraged to set up a skill system for the pre-requisites or even further simplify it as they see fit. More detailed rules for Japanese martial arts will be provided in a future book.

INTEGRATED HAND-TO HAND SKILLS

Over the centuries, the Japanese have taken these instinctual fighting abilities of all humans and through disciplined regimen have melded the skills into a well-honed art form—budô.

OPTIONAL RULE: MARTIAL ARTS INSTRUCTOR AS AN OCCUPATION

If a keeper allows, an investigator can choose to run a dôjô and pay the monthly bills as a budô instructor. The dôjô is part of the character's personal assets and yields 3,500,000 to 7,000,000 yen a year (about two cents for US Dollars). This is a sensible way to explain a high rating in the expanded Martial Arts skill. Interesting scenarios can also spring from being a budô sensei.

AIKIDÔ/AIKIJUTSU—THE WAY OF THE SPIRIT

Weapons: none

Required Skills: Fist/Punch, Dodge, Kick

Aikidô is a system of pure self defense derived from the traditional weaponless fighting techniques of jûjutsu (see jûdô). Aikidô utilizes immobilizing holds and twisting throws using the attacker's own momentum and strength against him. A person trained in aikidô uses intuition coupled with self-defense to anticipate what an attacker has in mind and render it ineffective with an appropriate defense.

IAI/IAIDÔ—THE WAY OF THE SWORD DRAW

Weapon: Razor sharp katana blade, damage 1D10+db

Required Skills: Fist/Punch, Dodge

A method of swordsmanship that hones the skill of cutting one's opponent on the draw, usually at eye-level or the temple of the head. When attacked, iai involves drawing, parrying, and riposte with a lethal blow through the shoulder and spine. When the blade is freed, it is swung to shake off an enemy's blood and wiped clean before being returned to the scabbard. In practice sessions, the wiping of the blade is omitted. This style is ineffective without a shafted weapon.

JÛDÔ/JÛJUTSU—THE WAY OF SOFTNESS

Weapons: none

Required Skills: Dodge, Grapple (20+%)

Facing and grabbing the lapels, you are able to hold an opponent immobile. From this maneuver, you can perform any number of attacks: flip, throw, trip, strangle, dodge. A form of unarmed combat that stresses agile motions, astute mental judgment, and rigorous form rather than sheer physical strength. jûjutsu techniques *(waza)* include throwing *(nagewaza)*, grappling *(katamewaza)*, and attacking vital points *(atemiwaza)*. The first two techniques are used in competition, but atemiwaza is used only in practice or actual combat.

KARATÊ—EMPTY HAND

Weapons: Bo-ken, damage 1D3+db; kama (treat as hatchet/sickle), damage 1D6+1+db; sai (treat as butcher knife), damage 1D6+db

Required Skills: Fist/Punch, Kick, Block

An art of self defense that uses no weapons, karatê instead relies on three core techniques: arm strikes *(uchi)*, thrusts *(tsuki)*, and kicks *(keri)*. A distinction is made between offensive and defensive techniques, modified according to the position of one's opponent. For defense, there are various parrying methods *(uke)* corresponding to each of the offensive moves. There are two events in karatê competitions: form displays looking like choreographed dance *(kata)* and sparring matches *(kumite)*.

The primary focus is on unarmed combat. However, as a martial art developed by peasants, it also uses farming tools as weapons. The sai and kama were both originally used for churning up soil for planting and harvesting stalks.

KENDÔ—THE WAY OF THE SWORD

Weapon: Shinai, a bamboo sword, damage 1D2+stun

Armor: Enameled wood breastplate, helmet & shirt, HP 5

Required Skills: Fist/Punch, Block

Japanese fencing based on techniques of the two handed sword of the samurai, the katana. Before the Showa Period (1926–89), it was commonly referred to as kenjutsu or gekken. Kendô is a contemporary term that implies spiritual discipline as well as fencing technique; it is also decidedly less lethal than kenjutsu. This style is ineffective without a shafted weapon. (Fist/Punch is necessary so the sword wielder can coordinate his hand movements while striking with a sword.)

The four strategic elements of kendo are "Eyes first, footwork second, courage third, strength fourth."

The shinai is a hollow cylinder made of four shafts of split bamboo. It is bound with a leather grip and cap connected by a silk or nylon cord. The grip is a leather thong wound three times around the cylinder and knotted. The length of the shinai varies with age and height. It approximates the heft and balance of a katana sword, but is designed to shatter if struck too hard, which prevents severe injury. However, being struck by a shinai when not protected by armor stings intensely and causes welts and bruising.

KYÛDÔ—THE WAY OF THE BOW

Weapon: Wooden longbow, damage 1D6

Required Skills: Throw

In contrast to Western archery, the focus in kyûdô is on form rather than accuracy. Shooting an arrow involves eight steps: possessing the feet, the upper body and the bow, raising the arms, pulling back the arrow, positioning the arrow, letting loose, and remaining alert. (Kyûdô is ineffective at melee range.)

Picking up the bow, a practitioner notches one of two fletched arrows being held. With a precise and measured ritual, the string is pulled back, and the person waits. Meditating on the target, the right moment is reached when the target and shooter are one. Releasing, eyes are kept on the target after the shot. Finished, the kyûdôist then sits in seiza and the next person takes a turn at the target.

NAGINATA

Weapon: Sharp naginata polearm, damage 1D8+db

Required Skills: Fist/Punch, Block

The naginata blade is used for downward cuts, slices to the side and to block incoming blows. The butt of the polearm shaft is used for thrusts, strikes and parrying. Standing alert, there are five basic postures which progress into attack or defense forms. The basic cuts and thrusts all aim for the *men* (helmet), *do* (breastplate), *kote* (hand-guards) and *sunesate* (shin guards). Two principal moves possible with the naginata are the downward cut from overhead and the full circle swing to strike the men with great force; enough to behead with a real blade. The two basic techniques of naginata-jutsu are taking the initiative to attack or striking after a deflected attack when the opponent is confused. This style is ineffective without a shafted weapon.

The naginata is a weapon with a wooden shaft approximately 1.2 to 2.4 meters (4'–8') in length and a curved blade usually 30 to 60 centimeters (1'–2') long. A naginata gives the wielder an extended reach of 8'–10'. Depending upon the school and level of student, the blade is either sharpened or unsharpened. For safety, beginners often practice with hardwood bo-ken staffs of the same basic shape and heft.

NINJUTSU/SHINOBI—THE TECHNIQUE OF STEALTH

Weapons: various

Required Skills: Sneak, Hide, Climb

Legends trace the origins of ninjutsu back to early Japanese history, but it was the increasing unrest and frequent warfare of twelfth to sixteenth century medieval Japan which led to shinobi becoming an indispensible part of military operations.

The full-scale civil wars of the Sengoku Period (1467–1568) honed ninjutsu to a fine edge. The era also gave rise to the famous legends of ninja clans and their superhuman feats. While not quite so spectacular in real life, the historical clans still existing today are the Iga School, now based in Mie Prefecture, and the Koga School, currently based in Shiga Prefecture.

In the Edo Period (1600–1868), the advent of peace from the Tokugawa Shogûnate threatened to make ninjutsu and its specialists unneeded. To prevent this, ninja perfected and systemized ninjutsu into a martial art. The clans' master ninja codified the spy craft's techniques, specialized tools, and weapons in written texts rather than traditional secret methods of oral transmission. The best known surviving manual is the *Manjen Shûkai* (1676), compiled by Fujibayashi Samuji. This codex serves as an encyclopedia of the rules and traditions for Iga and Koga schools.

Rumors persist among Mythos scholars that a highly secretive ninja clan codified a secret manual, the *Kuragari Shûkai*, dictated by the Aku-Shin Kage himself. This clan arose out of obscurity and served the Dark Warlord from the late twelfth century to the early eighteenth century. They served as messengers to convey the Dark One's displeasure or anger. Though they gave themselves no name, peasants called this ninja clan *Kuragari No Kuragari*, Shadows of the Shadows. Even other ninja clans gave these spies wide berth out of mortal fear. This clan is whispered to have practiced horrible fell magics to destroy enemies of the clan and its ninja were thought not to be human at all. All copies of *Kuragari Shûkai* are believed to have been destroyed in the early eighteenth century when the Tokugawa Shogûnate wiped out the clan. Parts of the codex may be preserved encrypted within a work of Edo ribald fiction called *Magatta Michi, The Wandering Path*, by a surviving member of the clan, The Black Monk. (See pages 126–128 and 211.)

In the beginning of the late Edo Period, the ninja entered into popular culture through exaggerated depiction as a kind of super hero in storybooks and dramas—a trend that has continued into modern times. Novels, films, TV shows, and comics abound centering on the romantic figure of the ninja in the imaginations of both Japanese and foreigners.

Ninjutsu teaches seven different ways to adopt a disguise, methods of infiltrating military compounds like castles and civilian homes, and five ways to escape or hide based on the elements of fire, water, wood, earth or metal. Examples include using a hollow reed to hide underwater, lighting a fire as a diversion, hiding in concealed burrows in the ground, or sitting in a tree perch.

PLAYING A NINJA INVESTIGATOR

If you choose to play an investigator who is a ninja, it is suggested that you keep this chosen occupation secret. Only the keeper and player should know this fact. For a ninja's profession to be widely known is a disgraceful blunder amongst fellow ninja. You're not a very good spy if you can't even keep your own secret capacity under wraps. That's why in modern Japan, ninja are only works of popular fiction. The real ninja help propagate this myth that ninjutsu is a thing of yesteryear. Of course, if a whole investigator group is of the same ninja clan operating as a cell, each member should know of the other's nature.

Interesting situations arise when the ninja has to explain how he picked a lock so deftly when he claims to be a simple university professor by trade. Roleplaying this discrepancy of skills can be a fun side story.

Like all modern international men of mystery, ninja are often employed by a wealthy benefactor. Among a group of investigators, the group's sponsor can employ a ninja who works toward the common purpose of the rest of the investigators—they just have a secret agenda as well. On rare occasions, ninja will be on personal missions of vengeance.

Kuragari No Kuragari are universally reviled by all ninja as abominations; allowing them as investigators is strongly discouraged.

SUMÔ—MEETING WITH BLOWS

Weapons: none

Reqired Skills: Grapple, Headbutt

Sumô is a two thousand-year-old form of wrestling considered the national sport of Japan. The object of the sport is for a wrestler to force his opponent out of the center of an elevated ring of cement-hard clay.

PLAYING A SUMÔ INVESTIGATOR

If you choose an investigator to be a professional sumô wrestler, it is suggested that the character be at least SIZ 16 and STR 16. These are very big and powerful people, even by Western standards.

A retired sumô wrestler can not have a chonmage, and to keep one is an offense to the Sumô Association. Sumô also do not wear Western clothes during their careers, only kimono. After retirement, rebellious ex-sumô will wear specially tailored three piece suits.

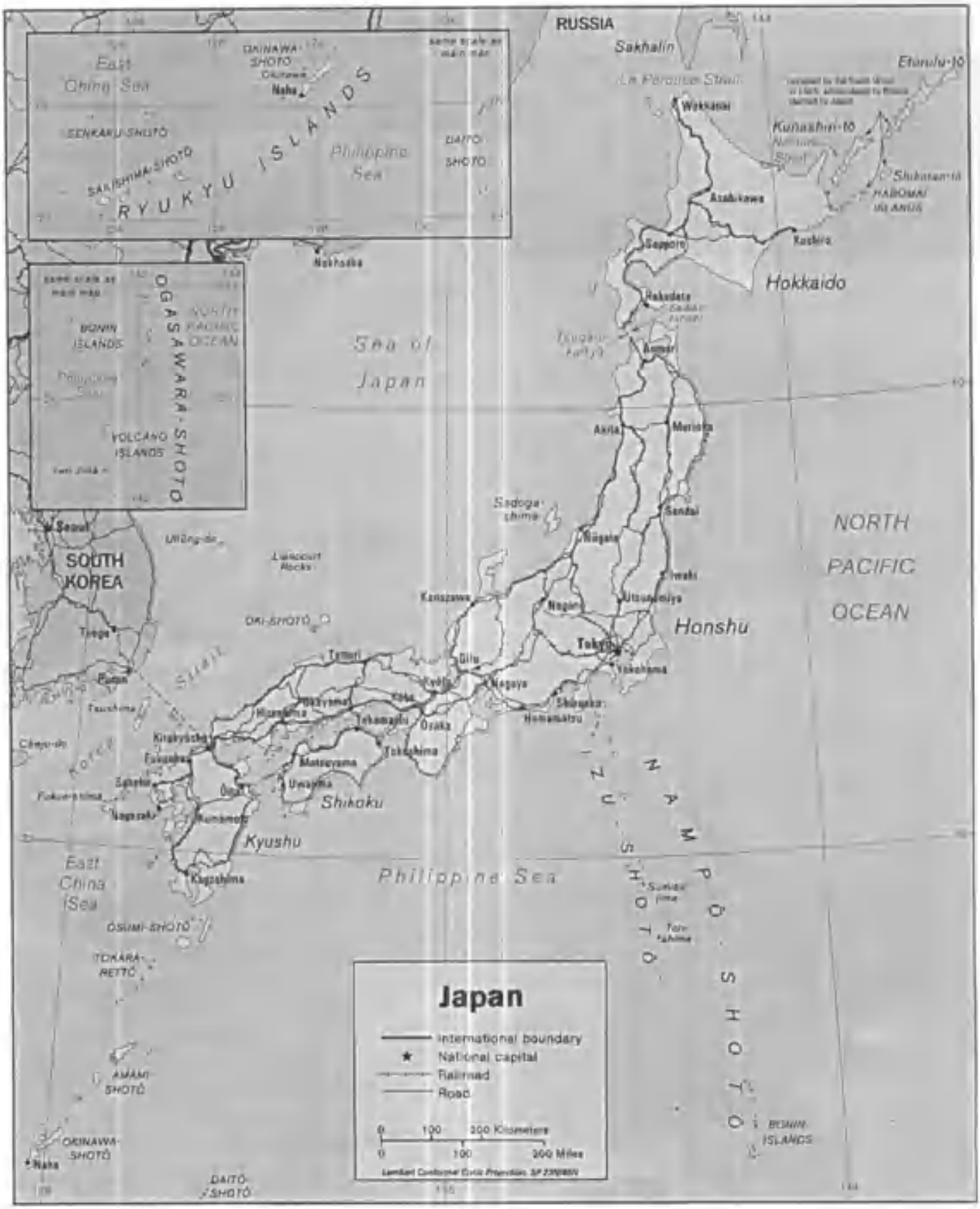
the *dôyo*, or to cause him to touch the surface of the ring with any part of his body other than the soles of his feet.

The wrestlers may spend up to the first four minutes in a ritual of stamping feet, squatting, puffing, glowering, and tossing salt in the air. Despite the posturing, ring decorum and sportsmanship are paramount. The actual bout takes only a matter of seconds to resolve.

Deciding who has stepped out or touched the ground first is extremely difficult and requires the close attention of the referee (*gyoji*), dressed in a court costume of a fourteenth century nobleman. The gyoji stands in the dôyo with the two wrestlers and official judges, *shimpan*, sit around the ring at floor level.

The Japan Sumô Association, the governing body of professional sumô, officially lists seventy winning moves, which are composed of throws, trips, lifts, thrusts, shoves and pulls. Of these seventy moves, forty are considered "classic" techniques but the actual number used in the average bout is around twenty or so.

日本
JAPAN (NIHON)



SECTION TWO: A BRIEF PRIMER

An introduction to everyday life in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Geography and Nature

Look into the water—what do you see?
It is your reflection.
Ah, but beware of what lies beneath the
mirrored surface . . .

—Musashi Miyamoto, *The Sixth Ring.*

Topography

The Japanese archipelago is composed of the islands of the *Kuril Chain, Izu-Ogasawara Chain, Sakhalin-Hokkaido Chain, Honshu Chain, Kyushu, Ryukyu Chain,* and *Shikoku,* with the *Seto Inland Sea Chain.* All of these islands owe their existence to the volcanic and seismic activity of the region, provoked by the energetic interaction of three geologic plates.

火山

VOLCANOES (Kazan)

The most important feature of the Japanese island chains is their situation in a zone of extreme geological instability. The Pacific Ocean's *Ring of Fire,* thousands of miles of volcanoes strung mostly along the edges of the ocean floor, gave birth to the steep mountainous terrain of the Japanese archipelago. With some mountain ridges reaching 10,000 feet, little space for habitable land is left on the islands of Japan. A string of some 188 volcanoes rise parallel with the archipelago and contribute to the ongoing formation of Japan, forty of those presently active. About twenty of these volcanoes erupt frequently and are a cause of micro-quakes.

Japan's volcanoes tend toward violent eruptions, leaving some of the largest mountain-top craters and calderas in the world. The types of eruptions also contribute to the conical shape of *kazan,* Japanese volcanic mountains. Early warning systems have been in place since the beginning of the nineteenth century but only offer short time for evacuation and do little to stop the destruction of an eruption. The national icon of the country as seen from Tokyo, Mount Fuji is on Honshu, the largest island. It is a semi-dormant member of this volcano family. Subterranean volcanic activity also contributes to the thousands of hot water mineral springs Japanese have flocked to over the centuries, for medicinal, social, and leisure activities.

地震

EARTHQUAKES (Jishin)

Over ten percent of the annual seismic energy released in the world centers in the Japanese Archipelago. In the past hundred years there have been over two dozen earthquakes over 5.5 magnitude. The most devastating in the twentieth century was the 1923 Tokyo quake, estimated at a magnitude of 7.8, which caused 100,000 deaths. Present-day Japan is not impervious to such quakes, despite high tech quake-proof buildings and disaster/rescue infrastructure. In 1995, a 6.9 magnitude super-quake that struck the city of Kobe killed 5,000 people and left 300,000 homeless.

The volcano zone and frequent earthquakes of Japan stem from the intersection of three tectonic plates under the country. Seismologists have discovered quakes seem to occur in clusters, separated by intervals of decades or more. Tokyo, in the Kanto region, is due for a major super-quake in the coming years. Some believe it may be of magnitude 8.0 or greater.

海

THE SEAS (Umi)

The shallow waters of the *East China Sea,* the *Sea of Japan,* and the *Sea of Okhotsk* surround Japan; only rarely do these waters exceed 12,000 feet in depth. The interplay of the continental plates not only spawns mountainous peaks but also deep lightless trenches. The *Kuril/Izu-Ogasawara Trench* is one of the deepest; reaching 30,000 feet in places. The other submarine trenches of note are the *Japan, Shikoku, Kyushu, Nankai,* and *Ryukyu* trenches. None of these other underwater trenches are contiguous.

四季

SEASONS (Shiki)

The predominantly northeast-southwest orientation of the 1,800 mile long archipelago in the Asian monsoon belt creates seasons of high rainfall and an extreme range of temperatures: the northernmost island of Hokkaido exists in a subarctic climate zone, while southernmost Okinawa rests in a subtropic climate zone.

Spring—brings strong winds and melting snow in higher altitudes leading to flooding. The famous pastime of cherry blossom viewing, *hanami*, begins in the warmer climes of southern Japan in late March, moving north over the course of several weeks.

Summer—begins with the rainy season. Creeping northward, it washes the pink petals from cherry trees and drags a thick stifling heat behind it.

Fall—heralds the *typhoon season*. Each year, a dozen or so storms make landfall.

Winter—October sees the first snows in Hokkaido carried on dry, cold northwest winds.

A RECIPE FOR DISASTER

The wide variations of weather and seismic extremes brings many natural disasters to Japan. Generations of Japanese have had to endure landslides, floods, typhoons, earthquakes, eruptions, and tidal waves. It's small wonder that the people of this island nation have become so tenacious over the millennia.

Regions of Japan

Based on geography, Japan is divided into eight districts using historically established boundaries. Modern Japan is further divided into 47 distinct administrative regions known as *prefectures* (see page 73). Each prefecture has a capital city and regional governmental infrastructure which answers to the national government.

北海度

HOKKAIDO

Principal City: Sapporo

Area: 32,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 5,500,000

Composed of: The prefecture consists of the entire Hokkaido island.

Terrain: Lakes, active volcanoes and tracts of forest. Most population centers are around the capital city of Sapporo.

Climate: Chilly summers and harsh arctic winters.

Resources: Agriculture (dairy), forestry, and fishing.

Industry: Alcohol, milk.

東北

TOHOKU

Principal City: Sendai

Area: 26,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 9,500,000

Composed of: N.E. Honshu's prefectures of Aomori, Iwate, Akita, Yamagata, Miyagi, and Fukushima.

Terrain: Mostly mountainous with population centers on the Pacific and Japan Sea coasts.

Climate: Summers are short and winters long.

Resources: Agriculture, forestry, fishing, petroleum, and natural gas.

Industry: Cement, chemical, iron, and steel.

関東

KANTO

Principal City: Tokyo-Yokohama

Area: 12,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 40,000,000

Composed of: East-Central Honshu's prefectures of Chiba, Gunma, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tochigi, and Tokyo.

Terrain: Predominantly plains. The most populated region of Japan as well as the cultural, political, and economic heart of the country.

Climate: Seasons are distinct and moderate.

Resources: Agriculture and limited fishing.

Industry: All sectors of commerce and industry.

中部

CHUBU

Principal City: Nagoya

Area: 26,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 21,000,000

Composed of: Central Honshu's prefectures of Aichi, Gifu, Fukui, Ishikawa, Nagano, Niigata, Shizuoka, Toyama, and Yamanashi.

Terrain: Highly mountainous including the Japanese Alps and numerous volcanoes (Mount Fuji). An abundance of primary rivers also grace this district including Shinanogawa, Kisogawa, and Tonyugawa. The plain of Niigata is the largest rice-producing region of Japan and the Nobi plain is densely populated and industrialized.

Climate: Winters are mild on the east coast and long on the west coast.

Resources: Agriculture (rice, tea, oranges), coastal fishing.

Industry: Ceramics, lacquerware, lumber, and oil.

近畿

KINKI

Principal Cities: Kobe, Kyoto, & Osaka

Area: 13,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 22,000,000

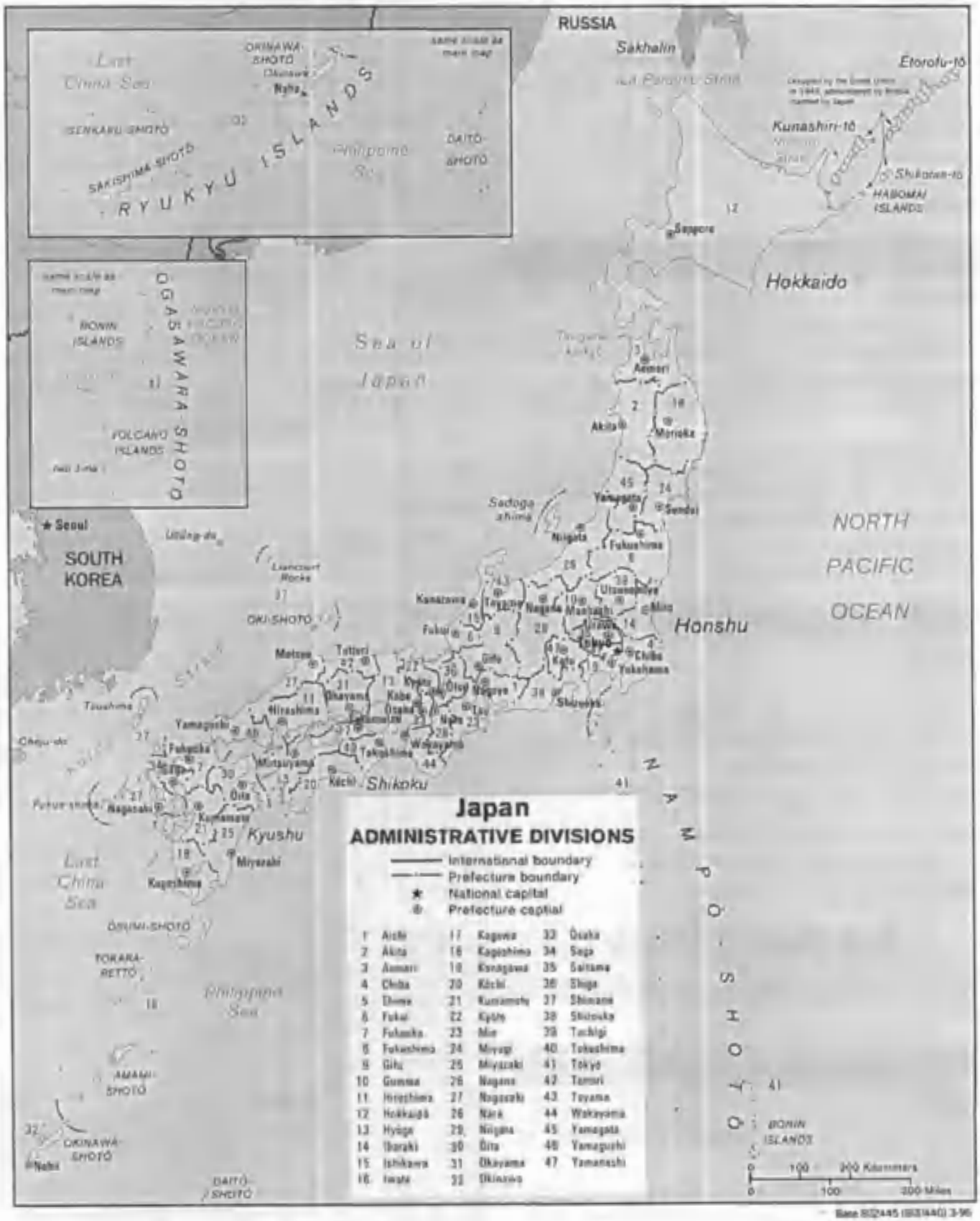
Composed of: West-Central Honshu's prefectures of Hyogo, Kyoto, Mie, Nara, Osaka, Shiga, and Wakayama.

Terrain: Mountainous with many plains and basins on the Seto Inland Sea. Population is clustered in the tri-city area.

Climate: The western coast receives heavy snowfall.

Resources: Agriculture (citrus, lumber, rice) and fishing.

Industry: Second largest industrial center in Japan.


RUSSIA
Sakhalin
Etorofu-tō
Kunashiri-tō
Shikotan-tō
HABOMAI ISLANDS
Sapporo
Hokkaido
RYUKYU ISLANDS
ORINAWA-SHOTŌ
Naha
SENKAKU-SHOTŌ
SAKISHIMA-SHOTŌ
DAITŌ-SHOTŌ
East China Sea
Philippine Sea
OGASAWARA-SHOTŌ
BONIN ISLANDS
VOLCANO ISLANDS
Sea of Japan
Aomori
Akita
Morioka
Yamagata
Sendai
Niigata
Fukushima
Sado-shima
Kanazawa
Nagano
Utsunomiya
Mito
Honshu
Fukui
Tokyo
Chiba
Yokohama
Matsue
Tottori
Kyoto
Ōsaka
Nagoya
Shizuoka
Hiroshima
Yamaguchi
Fukuoka
Matsuyama
Takamatsu
Wakayama
Kōchi
Shikoku
Nagasaki
Ōita
Kumamoto
Kyushu
Miyazaki
Kagoshima
ŌSUMI-SHOTŌ
TOKARA-RETTŌ
AMAMI-SHOTŌ
OKINAWA-SHOTŌ
DAITŌ-SHOTŌ
Seoul
SOUTH KOREA
Ulleung-do
Liancourt Rocks
OKI-SHOTŌ
Tsushima
Cheju-do
Fukue-shima
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
Japan
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS
International boundary
Prefecture boundary
National capital
Prefecture capital
1 Aichi
2 Akita
3 Aomori
4 Chiba
5 Ehime
6 Fukui
7 Fukuoka
8 Fukushima
9 Gifu
10 Gunma
11 Hiroshima
12 Hokkaidō
13 Hyōgo
14 Ibaraki
15 Ishikawa
16 Iwate
17 Kagawa
18 Kagoshima
19 Kanagawa
20 Kōchi
21 Kumamoto
22 Kyōto
23 Mie
24 Miyagi
25 Miyazaki
26 Nagano
27 Nagasaki
28 Nara
29 Niigata
30 Ōita
31 Okayama
32 Okinawa
33 Ōsaka
34 Saga
35 Saitama
36 Shiga
37 Shimane
38 Shizuoka
39 Tochigi
40 Tokushima
41 Tōkyō
42 Tottori
43 Toyama
44 Wakayama
45 Yamagata
46 Yamaguchi
47 Yamanashi
0 100 200 Kilometers
0 100 200 Miles

中国

CHUGOKU

Principal City: Hiroshima

Area: 12,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 8,000,000

Composed of: Western Honshu's prefectures of Hiroshima, Okayama, Shimane, Tottori, Miyagi, and Yamaguchi.

Terrain: Mostly plains; including the great Okayama Plain.

Climate: Mild winters and warm dry summers.

Resources: Agriculture (citrus, rice) limited fishing.

Industry: Most sectors of commerce.

四国

SHIKOKU

Principal City: Matsuyama

Area: 8,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 4,000,000

Composed of: The fourth and smallest of the main islands, Shikoku, which includes the four prefectures of Ehime, Kagawa, Kochi, and Tokushima.

Terrain: Extremely mountainous including the highest in Western Japan, Mount Ichizuchi. Area includes the hundreds of islands in the Seto Inland Sea. Population is concentrated on the northwestern coast.

Climate: Warm winters and humid summers.

Resources: Agriculture (citrus, rice) and fishing.

Industry: Shipbuilding, shipping, textiles.

九州

KYUSHU

Principal City: Fukuoka

Area: 18,000 sq. mi. **Population:** 12,000,000

Composed of: Kyushu island's prefectures of Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki, and Saga.

Terrain: Mountainous but with great expanses of plains including the Tsukushi and Kumamoto Plains.

Climate: Hot summers with high rainfall and winters mild.

Resources: Agriculture (dairy, citrus, rice) and fishing.

Industry: Coal, iron, shipbuilding, and steel.

THE KANTO PLAIN

Prefectures: Chiba, Gunma, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tochigi, and Tokyo.

東京

TOKYO

Area: 850 sq. mi. **Population:** 14,000,000

History

While geological evidence reveals the Kanto Plain has been inhabited since at least 10,000 B.C.E., the plain was not seriously settled until the fifteenth century when a castle was constructed at the present site of the imperial palace. It still remained little more than a simple fishing village near a marsh. In the seventeenth century, the new Tokugawa Shōgunate was concerned that institutionalized corruption in the traditional capital of Kyoto might infect its samurai ruling class. The *bakufu*, or tent government, felt that establishing a new capital on the Kanto Plain was the best solution.

The new capital was named Edo. The shōgunate required each ruling lord, or *daimyō*, of every province to spend one of every two years in the military capital of Edo. Daimyō brought with them entire retinues of samurai and a city quickly developed; by 1720 a population of one million made Edo the largest city in the world at that time. The Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the fall of Tokugawa military rule saw Edo renamed Tokyo ("eastern capital"), new home of the imperial family and the national government. Since the turn of the nineteenth century, the city has steadily grown as the political, commercial and financial hub of Japan. It suffered a setback in 1923 when the Great Tokyo Earthquake nearly flattened most of the city and ensuing fires caused over 100,000 deaths.

World War II saw most of Japan destroyed by Allied firebombing. After the war, the city was expanded and rebuilt, absorbing many nearby districts into Tokyo Prefecture, and creating 23 wards called *ku*. The Allied occupation forces further concentrated administration of the country into Tokyo and by 1960 it resulted in a near doubling of the population in a decade. Rapid urban growth in the 1970s and 1980s and the concentration of keiritsu corporate headquarters in Tokyo led to severe congestion and pollution. The bubble economy of the 1980s also caused land prices to skyrocket far beyond the means of the average citizen.

Today, the megatropolis of Tokyo is a jewel of Asia and the heart and soul of the nation. For the average citizen anything, anybody, or any trend or fad worth knowing begins on the streets of Tokyo.

Kanto Region

Geography and Climate

Sprawling upon the Kanto Plain, the Greater Tokyo Area is fed by the Edogawa, Arakawa and Sumidagawa rivers which empty into the sea at Tokyo Bay. The urban sprawl and the concrete jungles of Tokyo have significantly altered the climate of the Kanto Plain. Summers are stifling hot with few winds to blow away the smog layer. Winters are cold but with light snowfall. Earthquakes and micro-quakes frequently occur on the Kanto Plain. Inhabitants have come to expect them, but all dread the forecast 8.0+ "superquake" expected to hit Tokyo at any time. There is a project underway, still in the early stages, to fill in a sizable portion of Tokyo Bay with a hundred-acre artificial island. When completed in the twenty-first century, it will be populated with so-called smart buildings, stores, spas, recreational facilities and skyscrapers, further increasing the density of the Tokyo sprawl.

Points of Interest

The sheer size of Tokyo presents numerous spots of interest:

Imperial Palace—The home of the emperor is situated in the very center of the city along with sizable gardens, making the center of Tokyo a sizable green space devoid of skyscrapers and sprawl.

Diet Building—The seat of the Japanese government, the Diet building is where the elected and appointed officials such as the prime minister oversee the welfare of Japan.

Narita Airport—Located 40 miles outside of the city, Narita International Airport is built, with no small protest by farmers, upon former rice fields.

Shibuya and Harajuku—These Tokyo wards are home to the hippest trends for the fashion-conscious youth of Japan.

Shinjuku—This ward is home to the highest skyscrapers of Tokyo and has a reputation for some of the seediest bars and clubs, all run by Yakuza.

The Kinki District

Prefectures: Hyogo, Kyoto, Mie, Nara, Osaka, Shiga, and Wakayama.

京都

KYOTO

Area: 240 sq. mi. **Population:** 1,500,000

History

Located in the heart of the Kinki Region, Kyoto was the ancient western capital and home of the emperor of Japan from the Heian Era to the cusp of the Meiji Era (794–1868) and is accordingly rich in cultural heritage and sites. For centuries, the city was a nexus for most every major religious sect, many of which clustered around Lake Biwa and Mount Hiei. The city is also the birthplace of the tea ceremony *(sadō)*, flower arranging *(ikebana)*, Noh and Kabuki theater, and even sumo wrestling. Today, Kyoto may not be the political capital of Japan, but with hundreds of sacred sites it is easily its spiritual capital: Zen, Pureland, Shingon, and Tendai sects all have headquarters in Kyoto.

Geography and Climate

Landlocked, the ancient capital is bordered in the north by the Tamba mountains, including the famous monk retreats of Hiei-zan and Atagoyama. The rivers of Kamogawa and Katsuragawa run through the city itself, and the port city of Osaka hems in Kyoto to the south. With no proximity to a large body of water, Kyoto summers are very hot and winters extremely cold.

Industry

For centuries, Kyoto has been the center of traditional textiles and crafts and arts such as ceramics, kimono, woodblock printing, shamisen and biwa music, and more. Many "schools" or "houses," *ie* (e-ay), of crafts have mastered the aesthetics of their work to unequalled art forms under *iemoto*, clan masters. In addition to traditional crafts, modern Kyoto is also a prosperous center of industry and commerce, including electricity, chemicals and machinery.

Points of Interest

With over two dozen museums, the former Kyoto imperial palace and Nijo Palace, 200 national treasures, 1,700 important cultural properties, and hundreds of ancient sites of historical value, the city of Kyoto is a living treasure house with too many places to visit here with any equity.

大阪

OSAKA

Area: 90 sq. mi. **Population:** 3,000,000

History

Behind Tokyo and Yokohama, this industrial city in western Japan is the third largest in the country. Osaka has been a major trading port

Kinki Region

with Asia since the seventh century, though the city of Kobe has taken on this role in the last decades.

The skyline of Osaka today is overwhelmingly drab and industrial with layers of overlapping superhighways spidering through skyscrapers. Most of the structures of modern Osaka are no more than fifty years old; everything was flattened by the carpet firebombing during World War II, and after the war, the new buildings were quickly and haphazardly erected with no regard to an overall city plan, in an effort to restore Japan's economy.

Geography and Climate

Just south west of Kyoto, the city of Osaka clings to the deep U-shaped Osaka Bay of the Seto Inland Sea which helps moderate the weather of the city. Summers are hot and winters slightly milder than neighboring Kyoto.

Industry

In addition to being one of Japan's busiest port cities, Osaka also manufactures chemicals, steel, and textiles for the country and is the center of the Hanshin Industrial Zone. In recent years a great many Japanese pop stars, actors, and comedians have hailed from this industrial city.

Points of Interest

Osaka Castle—The most notable landmark is Osaka Castle built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1583. The castle survived several sieges during the medieval unification of Japan, but by the Tokugawa Era served as a market and storehouse for the region's rice and bureaucrats.

Kansai Airport—Built on an artificial island in Osaka Bay a decade ago, Kansai Airport is the second international airport for Japan and the most technologically advanced of the two.

Transportation

AIR TRAVEL

International Airports (Kokusai Kûkô)—Two international airports serve Japan—Narita Airport in Tokyo, and Kansai Airport in Osaka Bay.

Domestic Airports (Kûkô)—There are numerous domestic airports serving most major cities in Japan. Tokyo's former international airport, Haneda, now functions as a domestic airport but offers limited service to China and Korea.

Airlines (Kôkûji)—Two major airlines dominate air transport:

- **Japan Airlines (JAL):** formed in 1953, it is the country's oldest. Today, it's the biggest airline in Japan as well as one of the three largest in the word. JAL offers both domestic flights spanning from Hokkaido to Okinawa and international flights to over 35 countries and 50 cities worldwide. As a premium service, ticket fares are always the most expensive among airlines.
- **All Nippon Airways (ANA):** formerly concentrating upon domestic service, ANA has expanded in recent years to include routes to Taiwan, Korea, and China. ANA continues to serve all major Japanese cities with airbus shuttles for busy salarymen.

RAILWAYS (Tetsu-Dô)

Japan's railways are efficient, punctual, and thorough. Using Tokyo's Shinjuku Station, Tokyo Station, and Ueno Station as central hubs and departure points to all the cardinal directions in the country, rail is the most convenient means of travel in Japan. In Shinjuku Station alone, a million passengers pass through its doors a day. Without exaggeration, almost any location on the main islands of Japan can be reached via rail.

Japan Rail or JR *(koku-tetu)* is the recently privatized national rail company which controls over 13,000 miles of rail track. Competing with JR's higher fares, smaller local companies also serve limited areas.

Local rail service typically runs daily from 5 A.M. to midnight nationwide. In major cities such as Tokyo and Osaka commuters are highly dependent upon local rail service. So much so that land prices around train stations are at a premium and many mini-communities have grown around train stations. Local service stops at every train stop and is limited to a single city or rural area.

Express *(tokkyu)* services typically use faster engines and only stop at major train stations. This faster service cuts travel times in half but railways also charge substantially more.

Bullet train *(shinkansen)* is the high-speed first class railroad line provided by JR. Long trips provide sleeper cars. There are three main shinkansen lines. Stretching from Tokyo to Osaka and as far southwest as Hakata on Kyushu, the Tokaido San'yo Shinkansen is 660 miles long with the train reaching speeds up to 170 mph; a full trip from Tokyo to Hakata is 5 hours. The Tohoku Shinkansen links Tokyo to northern Morioka (330 miles) and takes 2:30 for the journey. The Joetsu Shinkansen connects Tokyo to Niigata (210 miles) with a trip taking 1:45. Generally speaking, shinkansen trains depart every ten minutes daily between 6 A.M. to midnight. Shinkansen fares are comparable with air transport.

FERRIES (Wata-Fune)

For areas unreachable by land based transportation, such as the hundreds of smaller coastal islands and islets dotting the inland sea, there is service by extensive ferries. While slower than bus, ferries are the only means of commute for those living on such islands. Ferries on high traffic routes run every 10–15 minutes, in rural areas every half hour to two hours. Some ferries are able to accommodate automobiles and trucks at a higher fare.

BUSES AND TAXIS (Basu & Takushi)

City buses are an affordable means to serve those areas too mountainous for trains or for shorter trips not meriting rail.

Long distance buses are countrywide. Buses offer a cheaper but slower alternative to shinkansen or airplane travel.

Taxis are very expensive but are frequently taken to and from train stations and ferry terminals. Their heaviest use comes after bars have closed and trains stop running, when taxi drivers can soak drunken salarymen.

CARS AND MOTORCYCLES (Karuma & Tansha)

Bicycles *(jidensha)* are the most frequently used form of personal transportation and used as often as public transport. People use bikes to go to the store or even to catch a train. The most common bicycle used is the cheap utility bike called *mamachari* in Japanese (see the center of the illustration above).

Mopeds and motorcycles are for those who can afford more than a bike; they can resort to the greater mobility of motorized two wheelers.

K-cars and K-trucks are sub-sub compacts, modular economy cars which easily navigate the tight roads of Japan (see the right of the illustration above).

Mass Communications

JOURNALISTS—PRINT AND TELEVISION

Like other corporations, media houses choose new journalists from cream of the crop of graduates of the best universities like Tokyo University (Todai). Once employed, a journalist has the security of life employment, and press clubs *(kisha kurabu)*: these are important clearing houses for press interviews and governmental press statements as well as offering tight social circles for journalists. While there is the danger that press clubs fraternize too closely with officials they are supposed to report on, journalists are highly regarded in society. Reporters do not write under individual bylines but instead collate data for distribution by senior staff reporters and correspondents.

NEWSPAPERS (Shinbun)

In most commercial sectors in Japan, two or three companies exercise a nationwide cooperative monopoly upon a market. In the case of newspapers, only two major papers in Japan really serve the large readership in Tokyo and Osaka, although other smaller papers do fill niche markets. Papers are published in morning and evening editions and focus primarily on in-depth news, commentary, editorials, and advertising. It should be noted that while scandals, crime, disasters and other daily news is freely reported, media self-censorship does exist to an extent when it involves affairs of the imperial family, the prime minister, or national issues the government deems too sensitive or too upsetting to the general populace. The Asahi and Yomiuri newspapers have a combined daily circulation of 50 million.

Asahi Shimbun (English edition *Asahi Evening News*)

Yomiuri Shimbun (English edition, *Daily Yomiuri*)

TELEVISION (Teribi)

There are of course dozens of regional Japanese channels but five broadcasting giants form the core market.

NHK—The oldest and largest is NHK. Formed in 1926, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation has been the largest source of news and educational programming in Japan. In many ways, it mirrors the PBS in the United States and the BBC in the United Kingdom.

LIBRARIES AND BOOK STORES (Tosho-Kan & Hon-Ya)

Japanese are ardent, well read, and voracious when it comes to the printed word: libraries are places of high regard and constant patronage; book stores enjoy brisk sales. There does tend to be the phenomenon of masses of people cluster-browsing manga, and not buying, while standing around the racks.

MAGAZINES (Zasshi)

The sensational, bizarre, lewd, and comic have their own niche markets in magazines.

Manga—Perhaps the most popular magazines are *manga*, comic books which themselves contain many sub-genres including adult, young men's, young women's and even educational. Printed on cheap paper stock, prices are good and avid readership is in the millions. Manga provide convenient reading material for students and salarymen in the thirty minute to two hour train commutes from the city center to urban districts.

TELEPHONES (Denwa)

The only national telephone company is the privatized Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT), though smaller phone companies do offer cellular service. The focus of technology widely adopted by the Japanese public is that which increases connectivity with others in a person's group of associates. This led to high sophistication of beepers *(pokeru beru)* in the 1980s, PHS cell phones *(keitai)* in the 1990s and now digital cell phones with built in e-mail access and CCD cameras as the new millennium unreels. Palm tops with wireless Internet access blur the spectrum. In the past few years, cell phones have changed Japanese culture faster than any other influence. Almost every youth and most adults own a cell phone. The cell phone comes in an amazing array of sizes, colors, and designs to answer this hunger by the populace.

COMPUTERS (Paso-Con)

Surprisingly, while Japan commands incredible technology, the national focus has been on exports, corporations, and electronic consumer products. What this means for the average Japanese citizen is while they may possess a cutting edge computer six months before release in the United States, connection to the Internet is sparse, uneven and expensive. A great deal of this has to do with the exorbitant per-minute fees for local telephone calls by telephone monopoly NTT. Add to this costly Internet service providers and access is out of the reach of all but the most affluent citizens. Even public schools have only one Internet computer, but the untrained teachers hardly ever use them. A subsidiary problem is that much of the Internet is in the English language. These factors make computers and Internet a novelty for most, so only techno-otaku are willing to pay for access. Most salarymen and office workers use sophisticated word processors with built-in printers.

Japanese Etiquette

"One time I dropped my pencil and bent over to retrieve it. When I stood, I found the whole room bowing to me!"

Here are a few common examples of traditions that have become classified as cultural etiquette. Players who have taken the Cultural Etiquette skill should consult this section if they wish to occasionally roleplay out specific examples of their skill.

IMPORTANCE OF THE BOW

The origins of the bow, called *jigi o suru*, harkens back to the feudal era when it was paramount to show the ruling lord proper respect. Some believe the bow was originally a display of submission—baring your neck for the mercy of the blade, much like the seemingly innocuous gesture of a handshake which was intended to show that you concealed no weapon in your hand before approaching a stranger.

The bow can be pretty contagious. Used for many situations in Japan, most foreigners think it serves chiefly as a greeting when meeting people, but is is also used to express thanks with a sincere "Arigah-toh!" to begin or end a lesson, to show respect for someone who has entered the room, to exchange business cards, to begin a martial arts session, to say goodbye and even to begin a baseball game.

Today, the bow is pretty simple—

Casual bow to person of much lower status:

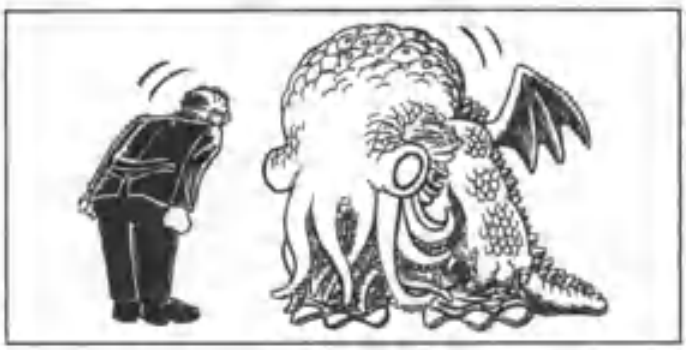
Hands to your side, simply nod your head.

Standard Bow:

Stand stationary with hands to the side and with back straight, bend at the hips 15, 30, or 60 degrees. The deeper the bow, the more respect you wish to show the recipient.

Formal Bow:

An older and highly respectful way to bow in formal occasions such as in a ceremony or greeting a high ranking official is done in traditional tatami mat rooms. Sitting on your knees with legs tucked under your body in seiza style, bend at the hips with arms extended in front of you until your palms touch the mat and your head is just above your knees.



GREETINGS AND GOODBYES

One very fortunate point about Japanese greetings is that they follow a very definite and prescribed pattern. This means that anyone, even foreigners, can quickly and easily learn these behaviors in order to elicit the best of first impressions.

Meeting someone for the first time:

People stand facing each other. If two large groups, both stand in lines facing each other with their respective group.

You: "Ha-jee-meh-ma-she-te."

New Person: "Ha-jee-meh-ma-she-te."

Both bow, the depth of the bow appropriate to the perceived difference in status. Be sure not to knock heads—this can be embarrassing.

You: "Wah-tah-she-wah (your name) deh-sue."

New Person: "Wah-tah-she-wah (name) deh-sue."

Together: "Yo-row-she-kew oh-knee-guy-she-mass."

Leaving for a short time:

People are walking away from each other.

You: "Jaah mah-tah, ne?"

Casual Friend: "Jaah mah-tah!"

Together: nod heads in informal bow.

Leaving for a long period OR never to return:

People stand facing each other.

"sniff" "sniff"

You: "(friend's name)-SAN, Sah-yo-nah-rah!"

Trusted Friend: "Sah-yo-nah-rah!"

Together: Bow.

Daintily dab tear from corner of eye.

NEW SKILL

CULTURAL ETIQUETTE, *Sahō* (15%)

Over the centuries, the social rules for Japanese culture have developed into tangled customs, convoluting conventions, and ancient traditions. Traditional Japanese etiquette is all inclusive concerning behavior and attitude, leaving nothing to chance. Conforming to this sternly stylized way of behavior consumed much of the people's energy and spirit in the past. Today, even native Japanese find themselves attending polishing schools and taking manners courses in university in order to become refined members of society. The higher echelons of Japanese society, the learned, rich, powerful, and royalty encourage their children to learn formal cultural etiquette. The ambitious study it of their own accord.

Basic levels of this ability enable a person, foreign or Japanese, to avoid serious social blunders—like wearing bathroom slippers to the dinner table or invoking Shinto deities over rice by stabbing it with chopsticks.

Medium levels of Cultural Etiquette mean the person is able to conduct polite greetings, introductions, and farewells, speak basic Keigo (honorific language) to given guests and customers, and understand the social structure of traditional Japanese society.

High levels of Cultural Etiquette allow an investigator to speak flawless Keigo, to show deference to superiors, act as a traditional go-between in disputes, business unions, and marriages, manipulate the traditional social structure for a desired result, and show the proper decorum at the dinner table with even the emperor. Those seeking further social refinement should also study traditional Japanese arts or crafts.

It's much easier to gain information or say a vital piece of a Mythos mystery if your interviewees aren't giggling at their own inept or unusual blunder you have committed while trying to ask a serious question—information flows much more smoothly when you act within accepted social norms.

MEISHI: EXCHANGING CARDS

The exchange of business cards, *meishi*, is a standard practice upon meeting a person for the first time in a formal or business setting.

In Japanese society, meishi serve several useful purposes:

- Japanese names, especially old ones, use non-standard Chinese characters and can be hard for even fellow Japanese to read and pronounce.
- Meishi can be very effective self-introductions and can be used in lieu of a formal letter of introduction.
- They are useful to businessmen who are always trying to expand their network of connections.
- A good meishi card can tell the receiver not only the person's name but their company or institutional affiliation and rank or title. This means you can quickly discern their rank and relationship to you and respond accordingly with the proper level of deference and keigo.
- Meishi can either be of the very plain variety or tiny works of art. This can indicate the profession of the person giving it: is he a company man or a free agent?

LET'S MEISHI!

Step 1
Approach your quarry and stand face to face.

Step 2
Carefully pull out a fresh and clean meishi from your meishi box with no quick jerky movements that may startle your prey.

Step 3
With both hands, hold your card on the left and right edges with the scribbly bits facing the opponent so they may read aforementioned scribbly bits.

Step 4
Fully extend your arms straight out with your precious cargo within your now aching fingers and make sure it is appropriately within visual range of the other western being.

Step 5
Bow your head with arms still outstretched, waiting for the person to snatch it from your grasp. (If the white making sure your neck is exposed so it can be lopped off if you performed any part of the previous steps improperly. When the card is taken, say "oh-hanee-gay-she-mos" and gleefully straighten.

Step 6
Upon receiving the adversary's card, hold in front of you or place it on the table and consider it thoughtfully as one would contemplate a Zen koan.

(DO NOT shove in back pocket and sit down! The meishi represents the person, so do so only if you wish to render great insult.)

The Japanese Yen

The Japanese monetary unit, the *yen*, is based upon the most basic coin denomination of 1 yen instead of higher valued paper money like the US dollar. The US dollar is of course worth 100 pennies, but the basic US monetary unit is set at one dollar. While currency rates in the recent past have fluctuated wildly, the easiest way to convert US dollar amounts to yen is to add two zeros to any dollar amount. So, 1 US dollar = 100 yen. If you wish to reflect hard economic times for Japan, you can alter this figure anywhere from $1 = 110–150¥. But it's much easier to use a 1-to-100 conversion. Therefore, in yen, investigator incomes for the present day would look like this—

For the Present Day, roll 1D10.

1 = 1,500,000¥,	**2 = 2,500,000¥,**	**3 = 3,500,000¥,**
4 = 4,500,000¥,	**5 = 5,500,000¥,**	**6 = 7,500,000¥,**
7 = 10,000,000¥,	**8 = 20,000,000¥,**	**9 = 30,000,000¥,**
10 = 50,000,000.		

A Japanese investigator has property and holdings worth five times his or her yearly income. Japanese don't play the market and are very conservative, preferring long term investments. Of assets, 20% is banked as cash; the rest is invested in land holdings, community businesses, valuables, traditional art, or whatever is appropriate to the character. Land values are notoriously high in Japan, so land holdings should be 1/2 of those in other settings. Note that due to restrictive laws, foreign investigators are not allowed to own land in Japan even if naturalized as citizens. Also, Japan has one of the highest costs of living in the world, with food costing 30% of monthly expenses and property values being sky high, so the yen doesn't go very far.

Yen Origins

The *han*, or feudal domains of old Japan, issued paper currency *(hansatsu)* around 1661 and, by the Meiji Era (1868–1912), over 244 regions had their own currency. This chaos was removed in 1871 with the institution of the *Shinka Jorei* (New Currency Regulation) that made the yen equal to the old gold unit of 1 *ryo*, and this new basic unit of currency replaced all other currency by 1879. Today, the yen (¥) is still the standard unit of currency in modern Japan. Investigators

MONEY OFFERINGS (Saisen)

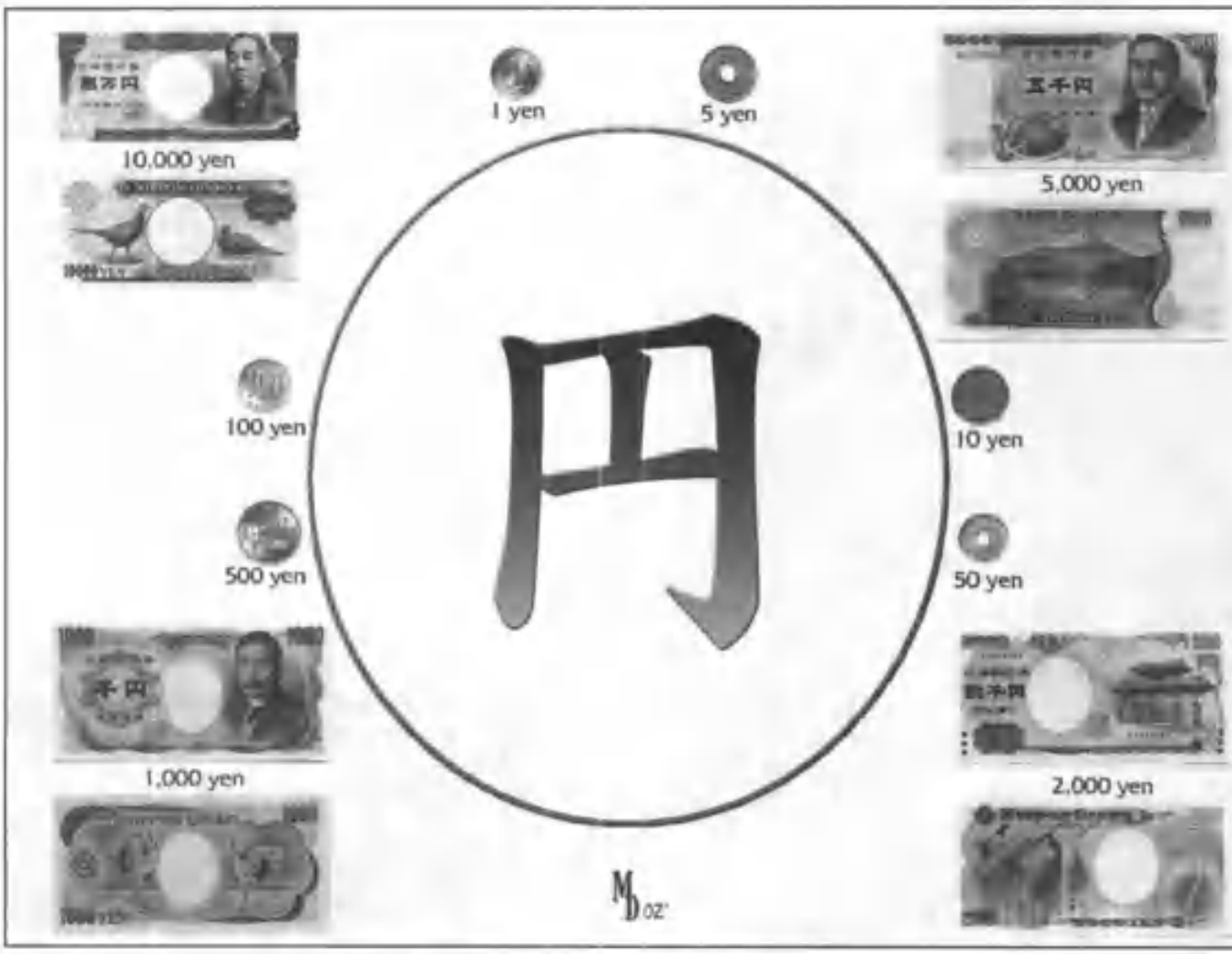
Money is offered at Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples in repayment for the fulfillment of a petition, prayer *(gankake)*, or the occasion of a rare visit to the location for worship. This custom is believed to only go back as far as the Edo Period, but the customs of offering newly minted coins to Shinto or Buddhist deities and gods goes back to ancient times. Before money, this custom was carried out with *shinmai*, a small bit of rice wrapped in paper.

Yen Denominations

NAME	*TYPE	DESCRIPTION	CIRCULATION	**US$ VALUE
1 Yen	Coin	US dime-sized aluminum coin. Extremely light.	Little used except as decoration.	~$.01
5 Yen	Coin	US nickel sized brass coin with a circular hole in center. With birth year considered lucky.	Semi-common.	~$.05
10 Yen	Coin	Copper coin slightly larger than a US nickel.	In common use.	~$.10
50 Yen	Coin	Silver colored coin with a central hole slightly smaller than a US quarter.	In common use.	~$.50
100 Yen	Coin	Silver colored coin the size of a US quarter.	Extremely common.	~$1.00
500 Yen	Coin	Thick silver coin the size of a US silver dollar.	In common use.	~$5.00
1,000 Yen	Note	Vanilla colored note with central watermark and famous author's portrait.	Extremely common.	~$10.00
5,000 Yen	Note	White and pink note, left aligned watermark.	Common.	~$50.00
10,000 Yen	Note	Yellowish note with a central watermark.	Very common.	~$100.00

* All coins bear the year in the emperor's era on one side (Ex.: 7 Heisei). A large denomination mark is on the back with a famous type of Japanese flora on the front.

** For the purpose of simplicity here, assume 100¥ = 1 US dollar.



COUNTING IN YEN

The following is the way that Japanese count numbers and specifically, money in the native language.

To read the chart—the Japanese word, followed by pronunciation and lastly the amount in English.

Ichi (e-chi/e)=one

Jū (Jew)=ten

Sen (zen)=one thousand

Man (maan)=ten thousand

Hyaku (ha-ya-kew)=one hundred

En (eh-n)=counter for the yen. (Suffix after amount)

So, applying this to denominations of cash—

100¥	Ichi-hyaku En
1000¥	Issen En
10,000¥	Ichi-man En
100,000¥	Jū-man En
1,000,000¥	Hyaku-man En
10,000,000¥	Issen-man En
100,000,000¥	Oku En
1,000,000,000¥	Issen-man En
1,000,000,000,000¥	Chou En

will have to use this currency outside of the major metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. Its use will also add an air of realism if not taken to bean counting.

Not to worry, though—most Japanese are scrupulously honest when giving foreigners change.

買い物

Costs and Equipment (Kaimono)

(100 ¥ = $1.00 US; drop two zeros for dollars)

CLOTHING

Men's Clothing

Standard Gray/Blue Salaryman Suit	¥20,000–100,000
Male Student's Uniform (button jacket, slacks)	¥40,000
Construction Worker Uniform	¥6,000
Trainer Outfit (matching sweats)	¥20,000
Briefcase, Leather	¥30,000
Company Lapel Pin	¥5,000–30,000
Pre-owned Jeans	¥6,000

Women's Clothing

Female Student's Uniform (dress, jacket, bow)	¥50,000
Office Lady's Uniform (miniskirt, vest, bow)	¥30,000
Chinese Style Silk Dress	¥45,000

Miniskirt (nylon/dacron)	¥2,000–10,000
Cute Animal Backpack	¥3,000–10,000
Down Jacket	¥15,000
Skeleton Rain Jacket (clear plastic)	¥5,000
Knee-high Boots	¥20,000
Elevator High Heels	¥3,000–20,000

Traditional Japanese Clothing

Dress Kimono (dyed silk w/pattern)	¥100,000–500,000
—To Rent (1 day)	¥20,000
Plain Black Kimono (cotton: married women)	¥150,000
Men's Hakama (cotton: sumō and Yakuza)	¥110,000
—To Rent (1 day)	¥10,000
Yukata (cotton summer kimono)	¥7,000
Wooden Geta (sandals)	¥2,000
Obi (kimono bow and sash)	¥40,000
Hairpins (enamel or mother of pearl)	¥9,000

Fashion

Manicure	¥1,500
Self-Hair Treatment (orange, yellow, brown)	¥5,000
Haircut (includes shave, hot towel, and nose hair)	¥2,000
Dreadlocks	¥40,000
Tanning Booth Session	¥4,000
G-Shock Sports Watch	¥15,000
Titanium Watch	¥60,000

COMMUNICATION

Telecommunications

PHS Phone ("Keitai," per month; drops out indoors)	¥4,000
Cellular Phone (e-mail and CCD; per mo.)	¥15,000
Neptune Digital Phone (worldwide sat. service, per month)	¥60,000
NTT Local Telephone Service	¥10/5 minutes
International Telephone Call	¥50/minute
Pocket Bell (pager, per month)	¥1,000
GPS Vehicle Map System (city CDs extra)	¥75,000
GPS Automobile Navigation/Drive System	¥375,000

Computers

Word Processor (includes printer)	¥35,000
NEC Laptop (DOS 2001 OS, Japanese)	¥250,000
ISDN/DSL Hookup + Digital Modem	¥40,000
ISDN/DSL, per month	¥8,000
Electronic Dictionary/Kanji Reference	¥25,000
Palmtop DVD Reference Library	¥100,000
Palm Pilot (e-mail, wireless)	¥25,000

Print Media

English Newspaper/Tabloid	¥200
Manga (1,000 pages)	¥500
Glossy Magazine	¥750
Coffee Table Book	¥3500

WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

Training Equipment

Bamboo Shinai (kendô sword)	¥3,000
Bo-ken (hardwood staff)	¥4,000
Kendô/Naginata Armor (*men, kote, hama*; 5 HP)	¥55,000
Kyûdô no Yumi (specialized long bow, bamboo-wood composite)	¥70,000
Arrows (4 count)	¥4,000
Switchblade/Butterfly Knife	¥6,000
Tanto Dagger	¥10,000
Replica Katana (w/quality steel)	¥40,000
Authentic Katana	¥3,000,000
Naginata (halberd)	¥50,000
Replica Tachi (w/quality steel)	¥80,000
Authentic Tachi (extremely rare)	¥300,000,000
Shuriken (steel throwing knives, 4 count)	¥3,000
Replica Wakizashi (w/quality steel)	¥18,000
Authentic Wakizashi	¥600,000
Yari	¥20,000

Guns

.22 Bolt Action Rifle	¥50,000
.22 Rifle Shells (box of 500)	¥2,800
20-gauge Shotgun (2B)	¥70,000
20-gauge Shells (box of 25)	¥4,000?
Replica Gun (realistic but fires pellets)	¥10,000
Survival Game Paint Gun	¥8,000

ENTERTAINMENT

Electronics and Mass Media

Digital Handi-cam (passport-sized, Zeiss lenses)	¥150,000
Handheld Hi-8 Video Camera	¥70,000
Digital Camera (5.5 megapixel, 1 GB stick)	¥60,000
DVD Component System	¥60,000
Karaoke Machine (DVD/Laser Disc)	¥50,000
Portable Recordable Mini-Disc (MD)	¥20,000
Plasma Screen Television (2" thick wall screen)	¥800,000
Hi-Def Vision 30" Letterbox Television	¥90,000
Eye-Goggle LCD/Plasma Television	¥40,000
Bi-Lingual 4-Head VCR	¥30,000
Boombox (CD, MD, radio, and cassette)	¥40,000
Sony Playstation III, 1 Tera-bit	¥41,000
Sega Dreamcast Gold 3-D	¥30,000
Virtualboy	¥8,000
Game cartridge or CD (new/used)	¥7,000/¥3,000
Lighter sized Radio/Recorder	¥7,000
Disposable Camera (24exp. Color/B&W/Sepia)	¥1,000

Public Events

First-run Movie Ticket	¥1,900
J-Pop/Enka Concert Ticket	¥3,000–15,000
Baseball/Soccer Game	¥1,000–3,000
Noh/Kabuki Play (bad seats)	¥8,000
Sumô Match (bad seats, per day)	¥12,000

Spirits

Sake (warm/cold, one sifter, 500ml)	¥500
Plum Wine (*umeshi*)	¥600
Liquor (shot)	¥500
Beer (bottle/draft)	¥300
Cocktail (glass)	¥700
Whiskey (bottle, kept at favorite bar)	¥5,000–10,000

Entertainment Industry

Night at Snack Bar (per person)	¥10,000
Karaoke Bar (per person)	¥3,000
Bath House (massage + extras)	¥30,000
Bowling/Billiards (per hour)	¥1,500
Pink Club (men's club/strip bar; per hour)	¥9,000
Pachinko Parlor (per hour)	¥20,000
Video Game Center (per game)	¥100–400

LODGING AND DINING

Hotels (per night, two single beds)

Youth Hostel (common room and shared bath)	¥1,500
Capsule Hotel (men only)	¥3,000
Love Hotel (per hour)	¥1,000
(per night)	¥6,000
Business Hotel	¥8,000
International Hotel	¥20,000
5 Star Hotel	¥50,000
Ryôkan (traditional style, JP meals and bedding)	¥7,000
Onsen Resort (heated mineral springs)	¥15,000

Apartment Lease (per month; # = rooms, LDK = Living room, Dining room, Kitchen)

Rural 3 LDK ¥30,000
Urban 2 LDK ¥50,000
Downtown Tokyo 1 LDK ¥100,000
Japanese Style House, 2 floor 5 LDK ¥250,000,000
—Previously owned ¥120,000,000
—Lease per month ¥50,000

Restaurant Fare (per plate/per person)

Posh Sashimi Restaurant (ryōtei) ¥4,000–10,000
Fuga Restaurant (by invite only, Spring season) ¥17,000
Izakaya (Japanese pub) ¥3,000
Yaki-Tori-Ya (chicken ka-bobs) ¥2,000
Sushi Bar (per plate of two pieces) ¥100–300
Bowl of Noodles: Ramen/Udon/Soba ¥500
O-bento (cold, pre-made boxed meal) ¥700
Convenience Store (re-heatable fare) ¥300

Vending Machines (ubiquitous in Japan)

Can of Cola ¥120
Bottle of Beer, 1 Liter ¥400
Hot Instant Ramen ¥300
Ice Cream ¥200
Cigarettes ¥280
White Dress Shirt (for on-the-go salarymen) ¥1000

TRANSPORTATION

Public Transport

Taxi (first 5 minutes or 2 miles) ¥650
Taxi (per mile or 3 minutes) ¥200
Bus/Trolley/Tram (city route; slow) ¥200

Trains (Fare quoted is per 20 mi. For example, if a trip is 100 miles, multiply fare times five to get total fee.)

Local ¥500
Limited Express ¥1,000
Express (*tokyu*) ¥1,500
Shinkansen (bullet train) ¥3,000

Ferries

Local (boards vehicles and passengers; slow) ¥300–1,200
Hydrofoil (fast; passengers only) ¥4,000

Airlines

(For domestic destinations, calculate ¥1,000 per 1 mile.)
ANA Domestic (From Kansai Airport, Osaka)
Hokkaido ¥50,000
Okinawa ¥40,000
JAL International (Kansai/Narita Airports) Economy—
US/Europe/Australia/Bali/Thailand ¥120,000
Tour Package (same dest. as above) ¥250,000
Economy to Hong Kong/Korea ¥30,000–50,000

Motor Vehicles

(Engine displacement is in cc=cubic centimeters.)
BMW/Mercedes ¥7,500,000
RV Vehicle (Range Rover, SUV) ¥3,000,000
Family Car/Mini-van ¥1,200,000
K-Truck (modular, common utility vehicle; 650–2000cc)
—Options: Flat Bed/Canvas Top/Van ¥1,000,000

K-car/Mini (sub-compact; 550cc engine) ¥900,000
Harley Davidson Motorbike (1000cc) ¥700,000
Kawasaki Ninja Racing Cycle (400cc) ¥100,000
Moped Scooter, Basic ¥100,000
Moped Scooter, Stylish Vespa ¥200,000
Moped Scooter, Commercial
(125 cc, pictured on page 77) ¥270,000
Motorized Bike (50–70cc) ¥35,000
Street Bicycle (showroom new) ¥20,000
Utility Bicycle (used, pictured on page 77) ¥5,000
Scooter Board ¥7,000

Miscellaneous

Basic Calligraphy/Sumi-E Set (ink, inkstone, 2 horsehair brushes Lg + Sm, sand, parchment) ¥6,000
Beginner's Sadô Tea Ceremony Set (cloth, fan, bamboo whisk and dipper, iron kettle) ¥12,000
Buddhist Pilgrim Outfit (straw hat, white walking kimono, staff, prayer scarf) ¥35,000
Bunraku Puppet/Porcelain Doll ..... ¥100,000+/¥20,000
Gardening/Bonsai Tools (clay pots, wire, baby pine, clippers, saw, fertilizer) ¥40,000
Green Tea, 16 oz. (for Sadô ceremony; low/medium/high quality) ..... ¥2,000/¥6,000/¥20,000
Ikebana Tools (clippers, wire, spike base, book) ¥20,000
Koto/Shamisen/Biwa (stringed instrument) ¥70,000
Lacquerware/Ceramic Dish Set ..... ¥40,000+
Noh Masks/Kabuki Stylized Kimono ..... ¥350,000+
Rice paper, 10 lb. ream (sheets or scroll) ¥4,000
Sadô Tea Bowl (cheap/expensive) ..... ¥5,000/¥100,000
Tattoo (small/large) ..... ¥8,000/¥80,000
Ukiyo-E Print (authentic/replica) ..... ¥70,000/¥3,000
Yankee Worker's Outfit (includes utility belt, knicker bockers, tabi shoes and socks) ¥25,000

合法的な武器

Legal Weapons (Gôhôteki na Buki)

The Firearms and Swords Control Law of 1958 (*Jyuho Token Rui Shoji Torishimaribo/Jyutoho* [jew-toe-hoe]) separates all weapons into two categories. *Kenjû nado*, the first category, includes revolvers, handguns, machine guns, and cannons. *Ryôjû*, the second category, includes rifles, shotguns, compressed air guns, stun guns, crossbows, and bladed weapons. The general public in Japan is explicitly prohibited from possessing weapons belonging to the kenju nado class but may own weapons of the ryôjû class with a permit from a local police station, a *keisatsu hakusho*. (A valid hunting permit is also needed for possession of a rifle or shotgun; possession of firearms by foreigners is strongly discouraged.) Only certified members of the National Police Force and military Self Defense Forces are allowed legal possession of kenju class weapons. In addition, keisatsu hakusho permits are usually only granted for blades no longer than 1.5 feet in length. Exceptions are for proven family heirlooms, such as katanas, and weapons used for training purposes in martial arts schools. It is for this reason that the average Japanese citizen is more likely to confront an invasion of his home with an archaic weapon than a modern firearm.

There is low key criticism, however, of Jyutoho: while it allows government and police to keep firearms out of the hands of the public, it does nothing to defang a heavily armed Yakuza from which officials confiscate over 1000 illegal weapons a year. This is only the tip of a complex issue, as more and more average citizens are becoming attracted to guns through replica kits and paintball tournaments. As a result, an alarming number of confiscations of kenju class guns from non-Yakuza has been on the rise. There is rampant concern that Japan could become a *ju shakai*, a gun culture, if police are not vigilant.

Japanese Weapons Table

NAME	DESCRIPTION	BASE SKILL%	DAMAGE INFLICTED	BASE RANGE	ATTACKS /ROUND	HPs RESISTANCE	COST IN YEN (¥100=$1.00)
Bo-ken	wooden staff	20	1D3+db	touch	1	5	4,000
Butterfly Knife	flip-out knife	25	1D4+db	touch	1	9	6,000
Katana	long sword	10	1D10+db	touch	1	20	40,000/3,000,000
Kyûdô no Yumi	long bow	10	1D6+1	90	2/1	4	70,000
Naginata	polearm	15	1D8+db	touch	1	15	50,000
Shinai	bamboo sword	15	stun+db	touch	1	2	3,000
Shuriken	throwing star	throw %	1D3	throw	2/1	2	750
Tachi	great sword	05	2D8+db	touch	1	30	80,000/300,000,000
Tanto	dagger	20	1D4+db	touch	1	9	10,000
Wakizashi	short sword	15	1D6+1+db	touch	1	15	18,000/600,000
Yari	spear	throw%	1D10	throw	1	15	20,000

The most common civilian-legal firearms in Japan are the .22 bolt action rifle and the 20-gauge shotgun, both described in the Weapons Table in the *Call of Cthulhu* core rules book.

KATANA, LONG SWORD

Due to continual wars over the ages, sword production rose in Japan but sword quality dropped significantly and the secret of craftsmanship for long curved blades like the *tachi* (see below) was gradually lost. Armor continued to improve and become heavier to defeat a blade's keen edge, but instead of swords following the trend of the tachi's ever growing length, a new sword fighting style was developed, *iai-do*. The new fighting style consisted of jabs and slashes designed to penetrate exposed vitals in the joints of the new light weight *o-yoroi* enameled plate armor that was beginning to appear in ninth century Japan. In response to the iai-do style, master swordcrafters developed a shorter, heavier, and less curved blade that was also much cheaper and less labor intensive.

This new blade was the katana. A katana holds an extremely sharp edge from craftsmen folding and stratifying the metal with varying levels of carbon, producing a slightly curved blade around two feet (60 cm) in length.

The katana came to embody the spirit of the warrior code, Bushidō, both in its incredible beauty and deadly purpose. Honed for over four centuries into a fine art, the sword came to embody sophisticated grace in form, and grim beauty in purpose. "The more stunning a blade, the sharper it is and thus the more deadly, so as with a

Japanese Weapons and Armor, Identified

warrior wielding it," says the Bushidô code. Samurai wore the katana as a paired set with the *wakizashi*, a blade of the same style but shorter for close combat. This paired set was known as *daisho*, or "long and short."

Using a katana effectively requires the weapon skill specifically in katana. DEX 14 or higher would be useful if using the katana and wakizashi paired.

In medieval Japan, only those of the samurai class had the privilege of wearing the katana and wakizashi swords paired, as that signified the rank of the office for samurai. The same is true in the Dreamlands city-state of Edo, to be detailed in a future book.

Historical Era: Late Muromachi (1333–1573) to present.

KENDÔ ARMOR

With feet bare, the preferred *kendô* (Japanese fencing) uniform is a thick cotton *gi* jacket, *hakama* skirt, and *hachimaki*, a bandanna worn on the forehead with kanji of the kendô school's name. In kendô full contact sparring with a shinai (see below), special armor is worn atop the kendô uniform to protect the players. It is common for fencers to shout the name of an opponent's armor piece they are about to hit. Booming shouts of "MEN!" or "DÔ!" can often be heard in a training dojo. A navy blue uniform with matching blue armor is common for men. Women often wear equipment with a pure white color scheme.

Kendô fencers are protected by special light armor originally derived from medieval era *o-yoroi* plate armor. The *men* is a wire face mask with a surrounding padded wood helmet and flares to protect the neck. Points in fencing are earned when hitting the throat or top of the men. The torso is protected by the *dô*, a sturdy enameled wood chest plate that provides no protection for the back or shoulders. The entire belly is a fair target in sparring. The hands and wrists are protected with padded mittens, the *kote*. Striking the tops of the gloves for points is considered legal. The *tare*, a skirt of five overlapping quilted wood panels, serves to protect the thighs and groin. A strip of cloth with the name of the fencer or the dojo in kanji is often worn atop the tare. Note that the tare is the only piece of armor that is an illegal target in sparring.

It can take a novice fencer five to ten minutes to don the entire set of armor alone. An expert, a minute or less. Worn together, the entire suit of armor grants 5 hit points of protection.

Historical Era: 1920s to present.

SHINAI, KENDÔ BAMBOO SWORD

The shinai is a hollow cylinder made of four shafts of split bamboo. It is bound with a leather grip and cap connected by a silk or nylon cord. The grip is a leather thong wound three times around the cylinder and knotted. The length of the shinai varies with age and height. It approximates the heft and balance of a katana sword, but is designed to shatter if it hits too hard, thus preventing severe injury. However, being struck by a shinai when not protected by kendô armor stings intensely, causing welts and bruising. The fighting style of kendô fencing is completely ineffective without a shafted weapon like the shinai.

Historical Era: 1920s to present.

TACHI, GREAT SWORD

Tachi are worn on the hip with a cord that is attached to each end of the tachi's scabbard. The tachi's distinctive high curvature is only hinted at in its famous successor, the katana. Tachi tend to run rather long and vary between 65 and 70 cm. The scabbards and swords are of the highest craftsmanship, decorated with ornate flourishes.

Adapting swords used in the ancient Kofun Period to deal with mounted battle, the Kamakura-era tachi craftsmen brought the art of swordsmithing to previously unknown levels, so that today most bladed Japanese national treasures come from this era. Blades in museums displayed curve down are often high quality tachi which have endured over the centuries thanks to their superior craftsmanship. (Because authentic historical tachi are so rare and of such incredible quality, the few that are actually available are insanely expensive—see "Weapons and Ammunition" on page 82.)

The tachi was developed to counter problems of mounted combat. Evolving thickness of *keiko* and *tanko* armor in early Japan caused the tachi to change over time, becoming longer and heavier to penetrate these new obstacles. This went to bizarre extremes, ending in the development of blades reaching 1–1.9 meters (3–6 feet) for use only in mounted battle, the *no-dachi* (not described here). Though the tachi is designed for mounted combat, it can be used deftly in ground combat due to its superior craftsmanship.

Several of the more powerful legendary swords still in existence today came from this type of blade due to the craftsmen's spirits invested in the work. The crafting of a tachi truly was a mystical experience. The swordcrafting art was a holdover from the powerful days of the Kofun and Muvian eras, secrets lost and never quite regained in the crafting of the katana, though a powerful weapon in its own right.

The tachi has slightly better reach and superior materials to a katana because the metal is folded hundreds of times in the blade, increasing strength dramatically. The balance of such blades is superb. The high tensile strength also gives the tachi a good chance of snapping an opponent's sword in combat.

In the Dreamlands, Yamato warriors carry these swords, as their craftsmen still practice the art of their forging. Often the scabbards are dripping with numerous comma-shaped jewels, magatama, which are central to Shinto worship.

Historical Era: Middle Heian to early Muromachi period.

WAKIZASHI, SHORT SWORD

Wakizashi vary in length between 30.3 cm and 68 cm and are slipped into the waist sash like a katana.

During the Momoyama and the ensuing Edo Period, the wakizashi was worn with the katana. Both blades were worn slipped through the waist sash on the hip. The swords were worn parallel on each side with the hilts thrust out or crossing each other. Only samurai warriors were allowed to wear such a set as a show of their authority.

Historical Era: Later Muromachi to present. ☯

Scroll One, Section Three

The mysterious and fearsome Brotherhood of the Black Lotus conducts a gruesome Tantric ritual.

SECTION THREE: A DARK PERSPECTIVE

Japanese belief systems in the world of the Cthulhu Mythos.

The Children of the Atom will create their own offspring of flesh and metal, but devoid of spirit. Free from the Wheel but also lacking compassion. The karma of this folly will not go unpaid.
—Shinsoa Taizen/The Book of Myth

堕落仏教

Degenerate Buddhism (Daraku Bukkyô)

"... But, but ... I—I am a Buddhist. To perform such an act would invoke untold desire and suffering, it would perpetuate rebirth, encourage ignorance and cloud the path to true enlightenment. I could not in good conscience create such an abomination. I strive to release myself and others from earthly desires. It is my greatest passion."

"That is why you will do what I direct you to, Joken. You have deluded yourself. Even your 'goodness' is swathed in desire—the desire to do good, the desire to help others, the desire to better yourself. Does not your Awakened One tell you to release all desire? What you will do by creating a portal to the Hells, by serving Mara, is give your fellow priests a standard to live by. The evil of men and true ignorance are not the same thing. The greatest evil is delusion. You Buddhists with your meditation halls, and Four Noble Truths, all these grand gifts of an enlightened master and yet you still stray from the path to follow the likes of the Emerald Lama. You instinctively turn your back from the obvious evil and fall prey to the insidious one. Pride, Joken, these four scrolls you will create for me will spawn a corrupt form of Buddhism. Why? To show true Buddhists like you wherein the true path lies. You will do this. Lift your brush, Joken, and begin."

—The Monk Joken and Oni Lord Daraku,
Jigoku Zoshi/Scroll of the Hells

Who is the Buddha?

The historical Buddha, Siddhartha, was born in India in 463 B.C.E. and died at the ripe old age of eighty. Despite many myths and errors due to the passage of the millennia, it can be said with a fair amount of confidence that the Buddha was active 2,400 years ago—about 400 years before Christ.

Around 500 years Before the Common Era, the Shâkya tribe ruled the region of the Terai, Nepal bordering present-day India. Siddhartha was the son and prince of the Shâkya tribal chief. In later centuries, the Chinese called this kingdom Shâkya in their own tongue; the Japanese continued to use this transcription when adopting kanji. The Buddha's historical name was Gautama Siddhartha, and he was the only son of King Gautama Suddhodana and Queen Gautama Maya. The palace where they lived was called Kapilavastu, transliterated in the Kapila Palace in Japanese. King Suddhodana ruled over a small kingdom comprised of a republican state of tribal leaders gathering in a great hall to discuss government policy. As in present day India, a caste system existed in Siddhartha's time. These were the *brahman* (priests), *kshatriya* (royalty), *vaisya* (commoners) and *sudra* (the lower class). The Shâkyas were of the kshatriya caste. Hindu religion predominated, and the ancient written language of Sanskrit was the sacred language of the teachings and communications from the gods. Fledgling Buddhism also came to use Sanskrit as a language to transmit its teachings. The common language of the region, Pali, found use in later eras along with Classical Chinese when Buddhism spread.

Young Siddhartha, witnessing the fundamental sufferings of aging, illness and death outside the palace gates, was prompted to live an ascetic life for the answers to human suffering. After years of austere self denial surviving upon only one grain of rice a day, Siddhartha deemed the ascetic approach too extreme. Finally, coming upon a *bodhi* (bo) tree, he settled under it to contemplate a new path. In meditation, Siddhartha focused his mind on the truths of human beings and the universe. While in meditation, the evil Lord Mara attacked and tempted Siddhartha in an attempt to hinder attainment of enlightenment. Mara's whispers forced Siddhartha to go within and overcome delusions of evasiveness and desire. On the seventh day of seated contemplation, just as the morning star Aldebaran appeared at daybreak, Siddhartha awoke to the truth of the entire universe. He achieved

JAPANESE REPRESENTATION OF BUDDHA

satori, enlightenment, the awakening to the illusory nature of the human mind and the true composition of the universe. He was thirty-five and henceforth was known as the Lord Buddha, the Awakened One. During his lifetime, Buddha transmitted a great many teachings impossible to relate in this space but he did speak of what could be termed central concepts essential to the philosophy of Buddhism.

In *Cthulhu Japan*, the core of human suffering is denial of cold cosmic truth, the *Dharma*, that the Great Old Ones and the Outer Gods are uncaring entities to which humanity is less than algae clinging to dead rock. Enlightenment is the realization that human civilization is a great illusion. Sanity is the clinging to that illusion. Lord Mara keeps humans trapped.

(Accounts in *The Forbidden Sutra* relate that Lord Buddha's physical death at eighty can be attributed to a conspiracy. Corrupt agents of Lord Mara infiltrated Buddha's followers. A slow acting poison concocted from black lotus flower was laced into the Awakened One's simple fare of rice.)

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

In Japanese, *Shitai*, meaning "to make the truth clear."

1. **The Truth of Suffering:** the truth that the reality we live in is a world of suffering.
2. **The Truth of Cause:** the truth that suffering has cause.
3. **The Truth of Extinction:** the truth that when cause is extinguished, so is suffering.
4. **The Truth of the Path:** the truth of the proper way to achieve this.

Sickness is an example of the Truth of Suffering. The cause of the sickness is the Truth of Cause. If the cause is removed, the sickness is removed; this is the Truth of Extinction. The method of removal is the Truth of the Path.

In *Cthulhu Japan*, the sanity that we hold to dissembles the Four Noble Truths that actually dictate the human condition. Extinguishing delusion ends human suffering.

THE EIGHTFOLD NOBLE PATH

There are eight methods in which a person can follow the Truth of the Path, that of the Four Noble Truths.

1. **Shohken:** right view
2. **Shohshui:** right thinking
3. **Shohgo:** right speech
4. **Shohgoh:** right action
5. **Shohmyoh:** right living
6. **Shoshohjin:** right endeavor
7. **Shohnen:** right memory
8. **Shohjoh:** right meditation

The first six essentially say "do not hold wicked views, do not allow wicked thoughts, and do not use wicked language." The seventh and eighth are to positively discipline the mind. By practicing these each day, one can achieve objective control, or extinction, of the attachments and desires which cause suffering.

In *Cthulhu Japan*, few souls have the fortitude to achieve the first six; the rest are barred from further advancement by the temptations of Lord Mara. Discipline is power, and is not for the human masses. Mappo all but guarantees corruption of the path.

THE TWELVE CAUSATIONS

Lord Buddha made a clear distinction between the causes of suffering for aging and death as opposed to all other sufferings. No mortal can escape from aging and death itself. Buddha explored the causes of distress and sadness that affect human beings. It is human fate to age and die. So, what is the cause of aging and death? From the very process of having life in this reality. So, why is one given life? Due to the cycle of rebirths, or reincarnation, in the Six Realms of Desire. The Buddha followed a logical series of causes to arrive at a twelfth stage, the fundamental ultimate cause, *mumyoh*: the ignorance of not understanding the truth. Following the Four Noble Truths eliminates ignorance of the Twelve Causations of old age and death, ending suffering.

THE EIGHT SUFFERINGS

Hakku. From this comes the Japanese expression "shiku-hakku"—an agony or distress. The Buddha was aware that Earth is a reality of suffering. All things are impermanent; the clinging to the illusion of a static reality causes suffering. All humans grow old, become ill, and die. These are unavoidable facts. Humans feel this as distress, grief and anguish. Buddhism accepts the facts of the life cycle of birth, aging, illness and death as fundamental sufferings of all sentient beings. Along with four others, they are the Eight Sufferings.

1. birth
2. old age

3. illness
4. death
5. parting from loved ones
6. meeting with those one hates
7. inability to have what one desires
8. clinging to five sufferings of the mind and body

GREATER VEHICLE/LESSER VEHICLE

While Buddha said that he should not be worshiped and deified, 300–500 years after his death priesthoods and secret orders sprang up around his teachings all along the silk trade routes in Asia. Soon, a schism split Buddhism. No longer limited to holy orders of monastic disciples following the footsteps of Buddha's life to attain *Nirvana*, laymen felt that Buddhism should be attainable for all. In the seclusion of temples studying complex doctrines day and night, existing Buddhist sects had become less and less concerned with salvation of the general populace. In response, religious reform arose among lay believers establishing reformist sects to serve the masses. Monastic Buddhism was compared to a small one person boat paddling to reach the far shore of enlightenment: *Lesser Vehicle Buddhism*. Reformist groups offered the masses a great vessel to take them all across to the shore of enlightenment, the *Greater Vehicle*.

Hinyana (Theravada)—Lesser Vehicle

A form of Buddhism involving solitary practice of meditation and contemplation strictly for one's own emancipation: "benefitting self." Most esoteric sects of Buddhism fall into this class, including tantric practices. In Japan, Hinyana Buddhism includes the Esoteric sects of Tendai and Shingon, as well as patriarchal transmission of Dharma in the Zen sects of Rinzai and Soto.

Mahayana—Greater Vehicle

A form of Buddhism that insists that only through "benefitting others" by saving the other can one perfect "benefitting self." Derived from the concept that EVERYONE is capable of becoming a Buddha. The Japanese Pureland Sects, *Jodo*, took this one step further. The Buddha Amida created the Western Paradise of the Putelands, his promise enlightenment to any who give total surrender and faith. Merely saying Amida's name is enough for salvation. Pureland Sects have a congregation and lay priests somewhat mirroring Western faiths. In Japan, several sects exist to this day based on the teachings of major Jodo proponents such as Shinran and Nichiran. Jodo Shinshu and its two major sects are powerful Pureland organizations.

経典

Sutras (Kyôten [key-yo-ten])

Lord Buddha's recorded teachings are divided into doctrines of truth as well as rules or percepts necessary for the functioning of a Buddhist order. After Buddha's death, followers studied and interpreted his teachings and over the centuries; the accumulated volumes of interpretation became known as commentaries. The three elements of *teachings, precepts (kai),* and *commentaries* are called the "Three Stores" or "Three Baskets" and are collectively referred to as *sutras*.

Following Siddhartha's death, the disciple *Mahakasyapa* assumed leadership of the order. Fearful that the wisdom of his teacher would become scattered and lost, he gathered five hundred of Buddha's disciples who had attained *arhat* enlightenment and prompted them to systematize the lectures and precepts of the Awakened One. It fell upon Buddha's constant companion, *Ananda*, to memorize and recite the Buddha's sermons. The disciple *Upali* was charged with reciting the precepts. For the first time the Buddha's teachings were unified into doctrine. At a much later date, the sutras were transferred from oral form and collected into the written languages of Sanskrit and Pali. As Buddhism migrated to China, Tibet, and Japan, the sutras likewise were translated into the native languages of those lands.

THE WISDOM SUTRA (Han'nya-Kyoh/Prahna)

As indicated in both Japanese and Sanskrit, the name of this sutra translates as "wisdom," the core of this text's teachings. This wisdom is the ability to know truth, as distinguished from life wisdom. *The Wisdom Sutra* is not a single work but a collection of sutras that teach enlightenment through the perfection of wisdom. The most popular is the "The Essence of Prajna-paramita Sutra" which distills "The Great Wisdom Sutra" down to around 260 Chinese ideograms.

THE LOTUS SUTRA (Hoke-Kyoh)

The Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law (Myoh Renge-Kyoh) is shortened to *The Lotus Sutra*. The sutra stresses that anyone can become a Buddha and that the Lord Buddha's physical extinction was only a change in state; he still exists, watching humanity. *The Lotus Sutra* has had immeasurable influence on Japan. *Prince Shotoku, Saicho* (founder of the Tendai sect), and *Nichiren* (founder of the Nichiren sect) all emphasized the significance of this sutra.

THE TRIPLE PURE LAND SUTRA (Jyôdo-San Bukkyô)

"The Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra" (Muryôju-kyoh), "The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra" (Kanmuryôju-kyoh), and "The

THE FORBIDDEN SUTRA (Kinki Kyôten)

Also called *The Black Lotus Sutra, The Last Sutra, The Dying Sutra* and *The Unspeakable Sutra.*

For four hundred years, the teachings of the Awakened One were handed down via oral tradition from enlightened masters. A considerable gap of centuries exists between Buddha's life and when his words were written down. Some argue that Siddhartha's actual teachings were withheld and corrupted by those who left the world not yet ready. Sutras are watered down versions of Buddha's revelations. One secret order strives to preserve Lord Buddha's truth within a series of texts later called *The Forbidden Sutra*. This secret order has since reviled as degenerate by mainstream orders.

According to its protectors, the *Black Lotus Sutra* is the final sermon of the Lord Buddha, delivered as he lay on his deathbed slowly being ravaged from within by poison distilled from black lotus root. This poison induces intense prophetic visions. As he died, the Lord Buddha related to his disciples for the first time the cosmic revelations that Lord Maya used to tempt him with. The sutra also contains the clearest remaining text on the true nature of enlightenment and the cosmic Dharma.

Most mainstream Buddhists are forever changed once they have read the *Forbidden Sutra*. It becomes apparent that the *Pure Land Sutras* are more other than a thinly disguised ruse to worship the Seething Nuclear Chaos in Nirvana; that the *Garland Sutra* is a censored version of Buddha's enlightenment; and that the *Great Sutra* and *Diamond Prah Sutra* are obscure references to the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods. (See also pages 124–125.)

Amida Sutra" (Amida-Kyoh) are the fundamental texts of the Pure Land sects in Japan. The sutras proclaim that faith in Amida Buddha, existing in the *Pure Land of Utmost Bliss*, is the answer. Sentient beings must surrender and entrust enlightenment from an outside force, *Amida*, rather than from within.

THE GARLAND SUTRA (Kegon-Kyoh)

This sutra details the nature of the Buddha's enlightenment. The light of the Buddha Vairocana shines upon all living beings in this world of illusion. There exists within all the same wisdom possessed by Buddhas. Sentient beings exist among the Buddhas and Buddhas among sentient beings. Therefore, any living being is capable of attaining enlightenment.

THE MAHÂVAIROCANA SUTRA (Dai-Nichi-Kyoh)

The Great Sun Sutra. A major sutra of Esoteric Buddhism (notable Esoteric Buddhist sects in Japan are Shingon and Tendai), *The Great Sun Sutra* is an extension of *The Garland Sutra*. The immense compassionate spirit of Dai-nichi Nyorai (Mahâvairocana) embodies within himself the entire universe. Buddhas, bodhisattvas and gods that comprise the universe form a cosmic mandala. A matrix-like mandala in which all things are contained within the essence of the endless Buddha.

THE DIAMOND PEAK SUTRA

The second major sutra of Esoteric Buddhism. It emphasizes that one can transform into a Buddha, and originates the idea that one can become a Buddha in one's present body. This sutra is the basis for the Diamond Realm Mandala which portrays all of things included within each entity.

THE MIDDLE PATH

The middle path represents the practice of moderation in all aspects of life to attain enlightenment. It is a medium between the two extremes that the Buddha tried. A path of extreme asceticism is too difficult a path by which to attain enlightenment. Likewise, a path of comfort and worldly satisfaction also blunts reality. The middle path is the course that Buddha followed: moderation in all things to remove earthly attachments and desires.

Further Concepts

IMPERMANENCE

The belief that all things arise, change, and die. A fundamental concept in Buddhism, this sentiment is often conveyed in the expression, "All things are impermanent"; nothing exists forever, absolutely unchanged. Even within our bodies, a large number of cells die each moment, replaced by new ones (except when drinking beer). Eventually, our individual bodies cease to regenerate and death consummates life. The universe, seemingly infinite, is continually transforming and will one day extinguish. Humans live under the illusion that the present state of affairs will continue, unchanged, forever—a flawed perception of reality's ultimate truth. Buddhism teaches humans to affix their vision upon the truth of impermanence. From this vantage point a correct judgement about reality can be attained.

BODHI TREE

An important symbol in Buddhism, Siddhartha sat under the shelter of a bodhi tree to meditate. Through contemplation, he attained enlightenment and became the Awakened One. Originally known in ancient times as the *pippala* tree and believed to possess spiritual powers, the Buddha awakened to *bodai*, enlightenment, under its shade and so it came to symbolize auspicious awakening. The bodhi tree belongs to the mulberry family of trees and has a heart shaped leaf. Its seeds are spherical and are used in Buddhist rosaries.

EMANCIPATION (Gedatsu) AND THE SIX REALMS

Since ancient times in India, it has been believed that when all living things die, they are reborn into a new existence and they experience this rebirth again and again. This is called *transmigration*. Buddhists hold to this belief, the primary goal of Buddhism being to halt the cycle of rebirth through enlightenment. Esoteric Buddhism borrows heavily from Hindu doctrine, taking the concept of rebirth further to state that all sentient beings exist and are reborn into the "six states of existence," the Six Realms of Desire.

The six realms belong to the world of suffering in which all beings eventually age and die. Desire is the key force governing our universe from which we cannot escape. Like all forces, it must find equilibrium: because there is great pleasure, it must be balanced with commensurate misery.

1. **The way of devas:** the realm of heavenly beings.
2. **The way of human beings:** the mortal realm.
3. **The way of animals:** the realm of animals and instinct.
4. **The way of asuras:** the realm of evil filled with anger.

BUDDHIST CORE RPG CONCEPTS

Buddhist Aims in a Rice Bowl

Buddhism's primary goal is halting humanity's ride on the wheel of karma, *samsara*. To this end, many practices in Buddhist "religion" are associated with removing *karma*, attachments in this universe. The ultimate goal is total extinguishing of the flame of desire. In return, the seeker experiences enlightenment and ascension to Nirvana. *Nehan* Pure Land Buddhism, Jodo, paves this route for the masses, while Esoteric Buddhism (such as *Tendai* and *Shingon* Buddhism) utilizes mystical rites and ritual objects for individual attainment of *satori*, enlightenment.

Esoteric Buddhism

Concerned with karma, many esoteric rites try to remove or balance this force. Priests are also able to banish, ward, and bind creatures not native to the Earth Realm, as they are not part of the karmic order of the Six Realms. And as the hells, *Jigoku*, are punishment for one much bad karma, many prayers and spells dealing with Jigoku are used in Buddhism.

Three Key Terms for Investigators

Inga, Karma—"Cause and effect." Both simple actions and balance from previous rebirths. Does not have a quantifiable game statistic but comes into the game during roleplaying.

Satori—"Enlightenment." Cthulhu Mythos Skill percentile. The higher the score, the more enlightened, the more insane.

Rinne—"Rebirth" or "reincarnation." The fact that an investigator's soul is immortal and returns to mortal flesh to fight again. Immortal, that is, unless Cthulhu gets hungry.

5. **The way of pretas:** the realm of hungry spirits.

6. **The way of the beings in hell:** the realm of torture.

Because all beings are constantly being reborn on these "six paths," transmigration is also termed as *reincarnation* within the six realms.

All sentients cycle around and around the six realms anchored by a core of suffering. Just as gravity holds us to the earth, sentient beings must gain release from the six realms of transmigration to break free from the pull of suffering. To do this, one must accumulate practices of detachment from worldly desires through meditation to enter Nirvana, or be reborn in the Pure Land, thus achieving enlightenment. The release from reincarnation within the six realms is called *emancipation*. Linked with enlightenment, the three words of enlightenment, Nirvana and emancipation are often synonymous.

DHARMA

The Law of the Truth; the true teachings of the Buddha.

Japanese Buddhism

Five Japanese branches of Buddhism *(bukkyô)* are of interest within *Cthulhu Japan:* Shingon, Tendai, Zen, Nichiren, and Pureland. Offshoots of these mainstream groups have intentionally and unintentionally spawned corrupt "Mythos Buddhism," degenerate practices which infest the unseen corners of Japan and Asia at large.

TENDAI LOTUS BUKKYÔ (T'ien-T'ai Hokke)

Named after Mount T'en-t'ai in southeastern China where it was founded, this school looks to the *Lotus Sutra (Hokke)* for its guiding principles. The esoteric teachings of T'en-t'ai Buddhism were imported to Japan by the monk *Saicho (Dengyo Daishi)* who founded the *Tendai Lotus* school on Mount Hiei near Kyoto around the ninth century, a place which grew into a great center of Buddhist learning over the centuries. Along with Esoteric Shingon, Tendai has had a major influence on Japanese philosophy and attitudes about the Japanese spirit. In addition to the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, Tendai subscribes to the *Threefold Truth:* all things are of void, all things are temporary, and all things are in a state of both at once. The world of nothing is also the world of absolute reality, our world.

SHINGON ESOTERIC BUKKYÔ (Mikkyô)

Founded by Kôbô Daishi (Kûkai) in the ninth century, the Shingon school is known among Japanese as *Mikkyô* (Secret Teachings). Shingon originated in India, and slowly spread to numerous Asian countries such as Nepal, Tibet and eventually to Japan, where it still survives to this day. The core of Shingon is the *Mahâvairocana Sutra (Dainichi-kyô)*. Shingon practice combines doctrine, philosophy, deities (*Jisô, Fudô Myôô*), religious rituals, and meditation. The path to enlightenment is understanding the Three Mysteries: Esoteric Mudra of the Body, Esoteric Mantra of Speech and Internal Visualization of the Mind. Shingon strives through esoteric meditation to attain a state of void, with body and mind absorbed in non-activity.

PURE LAND BUKKYÔ (Jodo-Shu & Jodo-Shinshu)

The Pure Land school of Jodo-Shu was introduced to the masses of Japan by Honen in the twelfth century. Honen's disciple Shinran founded the more radical True Pureland Sect (Jodo Shinshu or Shin) which threw out all teachings except the *Pure Land Sutra*. The third school of Pureland, *Ji*, was formed by Ippen. Rather than building merit through deeds, Jodo belief holds that one only need say the name of Amida Buddha and trust in this Awakened One's ability to bring enlightenment. Through a single phrase, the name of the Amida Buddha; the nembutsu "nami Amida butsu" is salvation and entry into the Pure Land, the Western Paradise. Jodo has had a great influence on the arts of Japan; nineteenth century Noh and Kabuki plays are rife with Pure Land references. Today, Pure Land enjoys status as the largest Buddhist sect in Modern Japan.

NICHIREN-SHU

Named after the person who founded it, Nichiren was originally trained in the Tendai school but left dissatisfied. He preached that if the Japanese people did not follow the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, natural disasters and calamity would befall the nation. Nichiren's sharp criticisms brought him exile twice and finally an execution decree. His death sentence was stayed by a freak electrical storm interpreted as an omen. Nichiren's beliefs focus on two core practices: worshiping the Honzon Mandala, which depicts the Buddha nature within all people; and chanting praise of the *Lotus Sutra*, "nama myoho renge kyo." After Nichiren's death, his sect split into six new schools including one that would become the modern day sect Soka-Gakkai, one of the largest and most proactive groups in Japan.

ZEN BUKKYÔ (Soto School/Rinzai School)

Japanese Zen emphasizes sudden or instant awareness of reality through meditation. Derived from the Chinese school of Ch'an founded by Indian monk Boddhidharma around 500 C.E., Zen holds that all beings possess Buddha-nature within. Realization of this truth is satori, enlightenment. However, fully enlightened beings cannot convey or describe the satori state within the ordinary dualistic world

BUDDHA'S TEARS (Butsu no Namida)

Officially established as a new religion in the 1960s, Butsu no Namida borrows heavily from Pure Land and Nichiren-Shu for its background doctrine. Run by a charismatic leader, Asahara Shinryuu, this sect has an alarmingly sizable following of lay believers who study *The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears*, a small pamphlet containing the central precepts of this Buddhist sect: that only the tears of the Buddha can cleanse a spirit of karma and wash away the endless cycle of reincarnation.

BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLACK LOTUS (Kuroi Hasu Dòshi no Dantai)

Also known as the Green Caps, or *Daggas*, this ancient esoteric school of Buddhism holds the teachings of *The Forbidden Sutra, Kinko Kyoten*, as sacred. Tracing its origins to the Shâkya Kingdom and accompanying Buddhism's growth across India, China and Japan, this sect maintains it is the oldest and holds the purest teachings of Dharma by the Lord Buddha. Other sects are deluded by wishful thinking. Practicing tantric blood rituals, chanting arcane mantras, and constructing complex and intricate mandalas with the very lives of people, the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus is shrouded in secrecy and fable. Some believe the Brotherhood to contain ascended masters holding the surest key to enlightenment; others hold that the Brotherhood is a smear of lechertous and forbidden desire upon the face of the Buddhist faith. In Japan, the Green Caps led by Kuroi Bohsi (the Black Monk) have been illegal since World War II and often hide in open sight amongst Tendai and Shingon monks and nuns.

in which we exist. Zen Buddhism flowered in the twelfth century through the work of the monks Eisai and Dogen. Eisai's and Dogen's work has heavily influenced Japanese culture and continues to guide many aspects of twenty-first century Japan. Zen is perhaps the most widely known form of Buddhism in the West.

Rinzai Zen

Eisai was originally a Tendai priest with a personal goal of restoring a purer form of Buddhism to Japan. Traveling to China for study he returned to Japan and founded the Zen Rinzai School. Rinzai focuses on strict meditation upon riddle-like *koans*, and defending the nation with ceremonies and ritual prayers. Eisai's Zen came to heavily influence the samurai warrior class and Zen belief quickly blended with the philosophies of martial arts and swordsmanship. Zen influence also spread to the arts, stressing simple elegance and organic flow found in Noh theater, poetry, flower arranging, and the tea ceremony.

Soto Zen

Learning in early childhood through personal tragedy the impermanent nature of life, Dogen joined a Tendai monastery on Mount Hiei. After a trip to China, Dogen also returned deeply moved by Ch'an teachings. Founding the Soto Zen School in the thirteenth century, Dogen's practices focused on *zazen*, sitting up straight in an effortless state of meditation to achieve *satori*. Dogen supplemented this with intense study of the sutras.

Karma (Inga [In-ga])

Karma is the result of cosmic "cause and effect" accumulated within the many incarnations an entity incurs in its travels within the Six Realms of Desire.

The universe naturally returns to a dynamic state of balance if allowed so, yet all entities in their desires and attachments to the physical realm continually splash about in their will working and create ripples and eddies in the calm flow of the cosmos. Some make larger ripples, *much* larger ones. The Outer Gods and Great Old Ones are aware of this natural law of the universe, part of the Dharma, and use it to their advantage. Even the Great Old One Cthulhu knows that karma, some day in the distant future, will exact its price and he will die. That is why he guards the secret location of his progeny, Cthylla, who will take his power and release him when his demise occurs.

Incurring Karmic Balance

Karmic balance is closely tied with the Taoist concept of *Yin* and *Yang* (Japanese: *in/yō*) and may in fact be the same force at work. All things exist on a spectrum of extremes and oscillate between the two; this is karmic balance. Most mortals, limited by perception in four dimensions, can only glimpse the merest snapshot of the true fabric of reality. The interplay of countless streams of immeasurable forces

INGA, KARMA

Inga is the idea of cause and effect, also known as *karmic retribution* or *fate*. Inga is the simple fact that where there is cause there is always a resultant effect. Likewise, from every effect comes a cause. Humans carry out an act. The act becomes a cause, and consequences arise from the initial action. From this supposition, Buddhist belief states that if one carries out a "good" act (an enlightened or compassionate action), it will have a beneficial effect on the person's own life and others. Conversely, if one carries out an "evil" act (an ignorant or selfish action), it will have a "deleterious" effect. "Good cause, good effect. Bad cause, bad effect." Therefore, Buddhism promotes compassion, (the germ of "goodness") and avoids ignorance (which often begets "evil"). Inga has another name; it is better known in the West as karma.

and their opposing polarities escape the grasp of all but the most enlightened of mortals.

Perhaps a useful parable is of a person who hastily runs across a carpet, creating wrinkles and folds in the rug along the way, only to stop at the opposite edge.

It is a simple matter for one versed in the inner workings of the cosmos to metaphorically pull the other end of the carpet taut without a great expenditure of energy, for the universe is naturally inclined to equilibrium. Whether the person falls backward, hops off the carpet, or remains standing is up to the balance of karmic debt the being has built up since its point of genesis. If the entity has continually been a winner in a situation and imposed its will upon other beings, thus reshaping the cosmic flow of the universe, odds are that this time around the person is due for a loss, a balancing action. An enlightened being who invokes this "balancing effect" has no control over the outcome. Like an electrical conductor he or she has rendered a clear path for the universe to set things once again into harmony.

If an attacking kappa is planning to make a priest an economy-sized can of iced coffee and karmic balance is incurred, there is still the chance that the kappa, undeterred, might suck the priest dry. (The caster can choose the intensity but not the specific nature or the timing of the karma to befall the target.) These are the chances one takes playing with universal energies.

KARMIC BACKLASH

A priest or monk who invokes karmic balance against another creature risks personal karmic backlash. In this case, the karmic effect meant for the victim occurs to the entity that dabbled in the forces of karma in the first place.

KARMA VERSUS DESIRE IN *CTHULHU JAPAN*

While inga is a central idea in Buddhism, arguably it is not the focus of Buddhist practice. You might say that karma is a carryover from Buddhism's development from Hindu faith and more properly the primary concern of that ancient Indian religion. While the Buddha acknowledges inga, to the Awakened One it is a cause of suffering. Issues should more rightly be on the extinction of desire. It is desire that truly is the "spirit" of Buddhism. Admittedly, desire has great potential and it has been tied intimately with the notions of enlightenment and reincarnation. However, many in the Western world in the last century have gained exposure to Eastern Mysticism through pop culture and one idea that was readily understood was the idea of karma: "cause and effect." Another reason *Cthulhu Japan* develops karma is that the force of karmic balance is very similar to, if not the same as, Taoist Yin and Yang.

Buddhists spend considerable time in meditation, cleansing karma and taking special pains not to create more in an effort to attain Buddhahood. This shields them somewhat from side effects. (One would hope that when a Buddhist invokes karmic balance there is little that can happen to him or her in return).

In addition to physical backlash, there is another price for dabbling in karmic forces, an element of the cosmic truth. Tapping into karmic energies causes the caster to gain 1D3 percentiles in the Cthulhu Mythos skill. See the description of the Bestow Karma spell on pages 136–137 for further rules.

Keeper's note: *related to this, the greater a being's Enlightenment (i.e. Cthulhu Mythos skill percentile), the better understanding of the Dharma and the workings of cosmic truth, the lesser chance of something like "backlash" occurring. The implications here are that "normal" sane humans blunder about unaware of the true workings of the universe, the Dharma, and constantly inflict further karma upon themselves.*

KARMIC RETRIBUTION

Subtly different is *karmic retribution*. Those wishing to call upon karmic retribution must first consult the *Akashic Records*, a spiritual book of accounting where every entity's karmic actions are written. Accessible only through astral projection, the Akashic Records are essentially an accounting of all beings' activities imprinted upon the fabric of the cosmos through their countless incarnations. It is speculated that the Akashic Records are maintained by an entity known as *Emma-O* in *Yomi*, the Japanese land of the dead.

(At the keeper's option, astral projection can be performed in a meditative state as long as the investigator's magic points are near maximum; a successful Meditation roll is required.)

It is incredibly helpful if a seeker knows the "true name" *(honto no tamashi)* of the individual they are seeking to tip the scales on. Masters of the black art of Kotodama (see pages 112–113) consider a being's true name to be a unique harmonic "signature" which resonates with the vibrations of the universe when an entity is first created. A name is a "memory" of the creation of a being's lifeforce or spirit, the *tamashi*. Possession of this name is a key to controlling an entity. All beings have this cosmic name, even mortals, but most forget this vital key through their many incarnations within the Six Realms.

(Investigators who perform a ritual or consult a Kotodama master to discover their "cosmic name," or honto no tamashi, are well advised to closely guard it. Those knowing an entity's true name gain a +1D8 percentile bonus to Resistance Table rolls when performing spells or effects on that creature.)

While there is no good or evil in the Dharma of cosmic truth, karmic retribution can inflict "good" or "bad" karmic effects upon the victim. Good or bad being subjective—what the victim might deem an unfortunate development is not necessarily a moral or ethical evaluation on the part of the cosmos.

Little or no chance of karmic backlash exists when enacting karmic retribution; however, utilizing this effect takes considerable effort, resources and metaphysical skill on the part of the caster. The interesting thing about karmic retribution is that it even affects vastly more powerful beings than the initiator (like Great Old Ones). This does not mean that the ability to loosen the knot of bundled up karma upon a victim will save a "caster" from an entity's wrath afterwards.

SUSHI FOR THOUGHT

Much like light or gravity, karma is a subtle universal force. All beings, material and immaterial, existing within the Six Realms of Desire are subject to the effects of karmic force. Even Outer Gods and Great Old Ones accumulate karma. The only exceptions are Buddhas who dwell outside of time and space and thus have NO KARMA. Bodhisattvas, being 99% pure, possess negligible karma.

Karmic effect, the ripples a being's actions cause in the universe, is a matter of scale, a matter of momentum. The difference between the force behind a wave crashing on shore and a tidal wave crushing a city. Outer Gods and Great Old Ones do not accumulate karma the way humans do; they do not consider ingesting human victims murder, but a simple act of eating food. Ask yourself what karma you inflict eating rice.

However, the amount of karma debt that a human might conceivably accumulate could well be fatal to a mundane being, but would only be an annoyance to a Great Old One. The karma accumulated by a Great Old One—karma that can affect a god—can vaporize entire cities of mortals.

The death of one human at the hands of Cthulhu is as a grain of rice, but when a Great Old One consumes entire civilizations and lays waste to whole worlds, negative karmic feedback is sure to occur. In short, Mythos deities, who live for millennia, accumulate karma exceedingly slowly in comparison to mortal beings like humans. Perhaps the reason Great Cthulhu slumbers inert in the sunken city of R'lyeh is because of karmic consequence incurred by world-shattering deeds committed long ago.

菩提

ENLIGHTENMENT
(Bodai [Bow-die])

A DIFFERENT TRUTH

Mythos students have a different view of the Lord Buddha's mission. They reason that anyone should be suspicious of an entity that wishes to subsume all independent soul-forces in the universe within itself. What are the Cosmic Buddha's true motivations and goals? What will this cosmic being do when it has accomplished this goal, extinction of all unique souls? Who's to say that the Law of Buddha, Dharma, isn't actually the Law of Entropy? After all, humanity only has the word of the bodhisattvas and fervent believers . . . and *no one* returns from the black hole of Nirvana to speak of its "wonders."

Certain passages of *The Forbidden Lectures, Kinkí Kyôten,* are said to detail rituals which call these enlightened beings, the *botsu* and *bosatsu,* to the Earth Realm. Such actions, however, are often as dangerous as contacting Mythos beings such as Cthulhu or Azathoth. Most humans are hardly ready to receive the wisdom these alien beings have to offer.

REALITY CHECK

There is no good or evil in Buddhism: The *Botsu,* Buddha, is not one of the "good guys," he's only concerned with enlightenment of mortals across the universe. This transcendent being's influence and interests lie with humanity's fate only in regard to the education of humankind to the true nature of the universe. The Ultimate Truth. Dharma.

BUDDHIST-INFLUENCED MYTHOS TOMES

Throughout the ages, Buddhist monasteries, nestled in the remote countryside of Asia, were often the only refuge of the literate and educated intelligentsia of a region. When cities and warlords rose and fell due to strife and invasion, the monasteries remained isolated and remote from the forces of mankind. These outposts of enlightened masters also provided useful camouflage for the shady doings of degenerate Buddhists. More than one unreachable mountaintop monastery has served as a repository of unspeakable Cthulhu Mythos knowledge. With unlimited time and final purpose, fervent believers in the cosmic truths of the Mythos have painstakingly inscribed their mark upon Cthulhu Mythos literature in Asia:

Kinkí Kyôten—Faithfully protected and repeatedly copied by the Daiguji throughout the centuries. *The Forbidden Sutra* is perhaps also the most damning and damaging text in mainstream believers of Buddhism.

Jigoku Zoshi—Painted and inked by the monk Ishen under duress from Lord Daraku of the oni, this text acts as a portal to the dimension of the Buddhist Hells, *Jigoku.*

Doctrine of Buddha's Tears—A prayer booklet, members of the cult Butsu no Namida/Buddha's Tears use it to chant for entry to the void.

The Mysterious Path—A journal of the life of the Black Monk, its spiritual and moral tales are ribald and grim.

The implications—possible full disclosure of the existence of Cthulhu Mythos to the whole of humanity and, in the process, destruction of the pocket of abnormality created on Earth by previously ignorant human cultures. Humankind would join the other informed races in the universe, no doubt spelling the disintegration and end of recorded civilization as humans know it.

Does this mean Buddha means to drive the whole world insane in the process? If it helps to stop samsara and raise the consciousness of the whole human race to ascend to Nirvana, Buddha just might.

The Lord Buddha's motivations and manifestations within the *Cthulhu Japan* campaign setting are as mysterious and disturbing as any multi-tentacled horror: no one who is not enlightened can truly fathom this being's enigmatic purpose.

THE NATURE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

In contrast to the Western conception of Heaven, there is nothing of "sweetness and light" about ultimate enlightenment. Satori is an understanding of the true nature of the universe, that the Cthulhu Mythos is the only reality of it; The Law of Dharma and the cosmic insignificance of mankind in the grand scheme of things are one and the same. To comprehend "that-which-is-beyond-the-natural-ability-of-humans-to-know" is to transcend humanity and become more than human; indeed, it is to become inhuman.

Insanity and Enlightenment

The only difference between the insanity of glimpsing the Cthulhu Mythos in all its horrid glory and Buddhist enlightenment is that the latter is a controlled burn into the ocean of cosmic awareness. There is no going back. The consciousness of a person endowed with satori is no longer human in the any sense. To be perfectly enlightened is to cease to exist in every way, shape and form.

The natural instinctual reaction of even the most devout Buddhist is to recoil somewhat at this finality of self-extinction, to resist total diffusion and absorption into the background of the universe. The human ego does not lie down to die lightly.

THE AWFUL PRICE OF NIRVANA

Despite all the pretty words by two millennia of Buddhist sages, the dark truth is that Nirvana is the total extinguishing of a being's existence in the universe.

SUPREME ENLIGHTENMENT (Bodai)

The Sanskrit word *bodhi* carries the connotation of supreme enlightenment, and is transliterated to *bodai* in Japanese. Zen Buddhism takes the concept of bodai further: the seeking of sudden awakening, satori. To most lay Buddhists, satori and bodai are used interchangeably.

Bodai is an absolute understanding of the compassion and unfeverfathomable truths of the universe. Through enlightenment one transcends the human condition of samsara and suffering. Meditation, contemplation, and a lifestyle mirroring the historical Buddha are traditional means of achieving enlightenment. Pondering upon the attachments humans naturally form to "reality" is due to their limited perceptions as mortal vessels. Years of effort extinguishing desire for life's pleasures breaks a Buddhist free of the mental underpinnings harmful within the social structure of human culture. Bodai enables a Buddhist to remove the blinders that the world pulls over our eyes. A world of assumption and delusion; a world where humans believe that they are the center of the universe; a world that is to consume this.

Yes, all desires and attachments cease, reincarnation is halted, human suffering ends, but so does any sense of individual identity, the soul. An "enlightened being" merges with the fabric of the universe and the Dharma-Kâya, the Cosmic Buddha, woven as a part of the universal whole forever: it's a one way trip.

Only entities of the strongest will, such as *sambhoga-kâya* Buddhas who have never manifested in the physical realm, Great Old Ones, or Outer Gods can exert any influence upon our reality after passing through the gateway and reaching the dimension called Nirvana. The sambhoga-kâya Buddhas, such as Amida Buddha, hold open the dimensional gateway to Nirvana to allow enlightened beings to enter that place of ultimate nothingness and become forever inert and at peace.

To exist outside the reality of space-time is not something any human could endure and remain unaltered. Retaining any conventional sanity is not even a consideration.

The Cosmic Buddha truly is partial to humans, and wants them to join him in his existence. In the process, an aspirant ceases to be human, loses any sense of individuality, and strengthens the Buddha's reality by becoming merged with Absolute Truth, the Dharma-Kâya.

Nirvana, outside of time and space, is also where the Mythos Outer Gods reside. The Outer God Azathoth dwells there with its monstrous court. Lesser Gods insanely dancing around the Nuclear Chaos' amorphous form.

ENLIGHTENMENT: OPTIONAL RULES

For keepers with a sense of the ironic, the Cthulhu Mythos Knowledge statistic could also be considered a gauge of the amount of enlightenment a being possesses. The more Cthulhu Mythos knowledge possessed, the more enlightened the investigator.

So, within the *Cthulhu Japan* setting, a keeper could optionally rename the Mythos Knowledge score Enlightenment/Bodai.

A being with greater than a 35% score in Cthulhu Mythos is considered to have achieved satori: sudden awakening/living enlightenment. By virtue of achieving satori, a being discards conventional views about reality, and his Sanity is also suspect.

Sanity and Satori

There is a difference between a Zen master who has attained satori and someone who gains Mythos skill percentiles by an encounter with a shoggoth. The Zen master is gradually relinquishing his remaining sanity and is digesting the Mythos Dharma in small bits, learning a new alien and inhuman mindset. An "enlightened" human is not "sane" by any measurable standard, but is totally functional within human society. A Zen master will appear unorthodox and eccentric to the average person, a peculiar and intriguing teacher few suspect his

NIRVANA (Nehan)

The Japanese word *Nehan* is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word *Nirvana*, meaning "state of a flame being blown out." A deathless state of quiet and the refreshing presence of purity that comes into being when the fires of raging attachment and desire are extinguished; the fever of desire is cooled and perfection becomes complete upon physical death. Via meditation, the Buddha struggled against the attachments and desires of his own mind. By extinguishing this vigorously burning flame, he achieved a tranquil state separated from karmic suffering and the delusion of ego. This is the realm of Nirvana. One can take the extinguishing of the flame to also mean the "flame of life"—death. The death of the Buddha was called the "Great Extinction," or absolute Nirvana.

newfound alien mindset and psychic bond to the dimension of Nirvana, the deathless void between space and time.

Physical Travel to Nehan or Jodo

Only an investigator above a certain percentile of Cthulhu Mythos knowledge is able to physically travel to The Pure Lands/Jodo (20+% Mythos) or Nirvana/Nehan (40+% Mythos). A Botsu can open a Gate to those realms with the proper mantras (chants). All others are barred; it is physically impossible for them to travel there. (Bodhisattva/bosatsu have Cthulhu Mythos 99%, while Buddhas/Botsu have Cthulhu Mythos 100%.)

Traveling to Jodo often results in the traveler becoming trapped in a body-sized lotus blossom for several centuries until his Enlightenment score rises above 40%. Those who escape this fate are often not believed anyway when they return. After all, their sanity was unstable to begin with.

(A traveler also automatically gains 2D10 points of Cthulhu Mythos from the experience and loses 1D20 Sanity points.)

Of course, Nirvana is a one way trip. Whatever comes back to greet its former fellow investigators is certainly not human and is probably totally alien in its motivations.

Buddhist Entities

BOTSU, KEEPER OF THE GATE

The Cosmic Buddha occupies the same part of reality in the center of the universe beyond space and time as the Outer God Azathoth.

Keepers and players alike should quickly dismiss the merest inkling of the idea that Buddha is a force of "good" in opposition to the Outer Gods' "evil." There is no good or evil in Buddhist thought, just ignorance and mindfulness.

Instead, consider the Lord Buddha a Yin-Yang balance of stasis, order and awareness in opposition to Azathoth's perpetual mindless state of boundless chaos. The Dharma-Kâya is a universal force, but he is magnitudes less powerful than the natural tendency towards chaos and entropy in the universe embodied in Azathoth. The Keeper of the Law, Buddha, is not a part of Azathoth's court, but separate and invisible to the mindless Outer God. This explains why the connection has never been made between Nirvana and Azathoth's lair.

By the very nature of his role in the universe, the Dharma-Kâya rarely directly interferes with humanity's plight except when Azathoth has unbalanced things overly so. When the need does arise, such as the dawn of the age of Mappo, the final dark age, the Enlightened One can only take action after things have been set into motion by Azathoth. Moreover, the Great Teacher would only do so in a peaceful and non-confrontational way, for if the two Outer Gods were to confront one another, the result would be the instant annihilation of a large part of the physical universe. The Lord Buddha knows this reality; the Nuclear Chaos, however, has no inkling—for it is mindless. So it is the Buddha who wisely stays clear of his diametrical opposite, painstakingly cleaning up after damage is done by Azathoth through followers and messengers. The Dharma-Kâya is the passive, uncaring, detached and ultimately helpless sentience that permeates the universe, seeking others to join it to stave off the hungry maw of entropy.

ONE BUDDHA, THREE BODIES

So vast and transcendent is the entity colloquially called "the Lord Buddha" by humans, that three aspects, or "bodies" called *tri-kâya*, actually make up this one celestial force. They are the *Body of*

THE PURE LANDS/JODO

"THE BUDDHA" (Botsu/Hotoke)

"One who has awakened to the truth."

A Buddha is someone who, contemplating upon the teachings of the Cosmic Buddha, awakens to the truth of the universe. Therefore, anyone is able to become a Botsu and all Buddhists are ultimately attempting to become Buddhas. After the Siddhartha Buddha's physical shell died and he merged with the Cosmic Buddha, it was found that seven other Buddhas had already previously incarnated on Earth. The next physical manifestation of the Buddha is *Miroku* (me-row-coo), due to appear at the end of the final age of mankind, Mappo. Miroku is presently a Bodhisattva residing in the Tusita Heaven in the Realm of Heavenly Beings. Miroku waits to renew the Dharma and usher in a new golden age. He waits, observing the world.

Bosatsu, "Bodhisattvas"

Bodhisattva is a Sanskrit word for one who seeks enlightenment. Japanese scholars transliterated this word into *bosatsu*. These entities are, for lack of a better term, Buddhist saints who stay behind in the Six Realms rather than attain Buddhahood. Bodhisattva freely choose the austere path of striving to enlighten all sentient beings in this physical plane of Earth. They do this to aid others on the path to Buddhahood. The most well known Bosatsu in Japan are *Kannon*, *Fugen* and *Miroku*. These Bodhisattvas are infinitely close to Buddhahood. Bosatsu can be quite powerful and upon reaching full Buddhahood are said to "rule" over entire self-created universes; the Amida Buddha and his Pure Land of Jodo is an example of this. The Cosmic Buddha, the *Dharma-Kâya*, is this universe's ruling Awakened One.

Manifestation (Nirmāna-Kāya), the *Reward Body (Sambhoga-Kāya)*, and the *Absolute* or *Law Body (Dharma-Kāya)*.

Dharma-Kāya is the Buddha as a cosmic force beyond any shape or form, purely abstract, ultimate truth. The Law of Truth, also called Dharma, is this being's composition. The Reward and Manifestation Bodies spring forth from this universal source, this fundamental force of Absolute Truth. It is this aspect that inhabits Nirvana and exposes imbalance and the lies of ignorance throughout the universe.

The Buddha is not any one man, but an amalgam of enlightened sentient entities of many planets and dimensions over many epochs which have attained "enlightenment" and joined with the cosmic "background noise," the Dharma-Kāya, that has been there since before the beginning of time. Every mortal being is said to have a Buddha within, they only need acknowledge it and shed all worldly illusions to "become." This is known as "The Body of Manifestation," the Buddha in mortal form. Nirmāna-Kāya have "tuned" their own spiritual frequency and merged with that of the timeless manifestation of truth, the Dharma-Kāya, the natural universal force opposite to chaos and ignorance that has arisen to keep the cosmos balanced.

When a mortal being achieves Nirvana in its lifetime, a feat that occurs only rarely, the Absolute Body gains a vessel to manifest in the Earthly Realm. The most commonly known occurrences are during the cycle of Mappo where a new mortal is born every 3000 years as a physical incarnation of the cosmic truth, being both the Nirmāna-Kāya and the Cosmic Buddha, the Dharma-Kāya, simultaneously. This joined entity is called the Lord Buddha. At this special time, the Mortal Botsu has two special missions: transmit the Dharma teachings of Buddhism afresh, and ensure, through his agents, that the Great Old Ones continue to slumber in their prison lairs.

THE THREE BODIES OF BUDDHA

The Reward Body is the aspect of the Buddha that has never been mortal but is sentient and aware with guided purpose. Sambhoga-Kāya promises enlightenment for less fortunate people. The Amida Buddha of the Pure Lands and all Bodhisattva are of the Reward Body, paranormal beings who still actively solicit believers on Earth. The Sambhoga-Kāya's main duty is to hold open the Gate to Nirvana, beyond time-space, and grant aid to others seeking to join it. The ultimate goal is to elevate all beings of the four dimensional cosmos into a transcendent state. This is so the masses may pass through the portal he holds open and leave the hell of physical existence, the Six Realms of Desire, behind forever.

MYTHOS HISTORY: DID YOU KNOW?

The Importation of Buddhism & Prince Shotoku

Introduced in the sixth century via Korea, Buddhism and its statues were seen as an insult to the native Shinto deities and risked incurring the wrath of the kami through plagues and natural disasters. Much greater pressure was put on the ruling class by regional clans who devoutly worshiped Cthulhu, Yig, Yidhra and other Great Old Ones in the guise of Japanese deities. Mythos believers went as far as dumping Buddha statues in rivers and destroying these idols. However, the powerful Soga Clan accepted the new faith of Buddhism as a magical vehicle and protests gradually subsided. The regent Prince Shotoku further focused the ruling classes' attention upon the teachings in the sutras and other aspects of the newly imported Buddhism.

The Revolt on Mount Hiei

The feudal warlord Nobunaga Oda, sanity already in question, barricaded and slaughtered over 20,000 priests and believers of the Ikkō-shū sect inside their own compound. This was only the worst incident in a systematic purification of Mount Hiei, already in open revolt against the military leaders of the land. Already susceptible to the whisperings of the Dark Warlord, the Aka-Shin Kage, Nobunaga purged the Kyoto priesthood for one reason, the *Kinki Kyōten. The Forbidden Sutra* had spread like wildfire among the ranks of the priesthood. Droves of formerly pacifist monks took up arms and roamed the countryside seeking vengeance.

Pilgrimage of Shikoku's 88 Temples

Some say that the reason Kūkai founded the pilgrimage to the 88 Buddhist temples on the island of Shikoku was not to remove the 88 sins of pilgrims, but rather to initiate a continuous ritual to keep at bay a corrupt and insidious entity slumbering under the island.

And the Gold Pavilion Burned

The Gold Pavilion, Gin-Kakuji of Kyoto, coated in 24 carat gold leaf, was burned to the ground by an insane priest in the 1940s. Hidden under the floorboards was a *tome* of the *Kinki Kyōten*. A scuffle between the monk and an undisclosed group for the sutra brought about the fire and destruction of the national treasure. The text is lost to history.

The True Intent of the Manhattan Project

Many speculate upon the reason why the Allied Forces chose Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the dropping of the A-bombs. Secret factions within the U.S. government and the cadre of scientists in the Manhattan Project were primarily intent upon stopping the plans of the Emerald Lama. Dagon strongholds in Japan had moved a strange and powerful artifact to these two Japanese cities from Manchuria. Hastur's plans for Japan were . . . delayed.

The Lazy and Derivative Approach

Some keepers may optionally decide to make the Cosmic Buddha and the Outer God Azathoth one and the same. Further, all Bodhisattvas can simply be masks of Nyarlathotep.

MARA: THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

An ancient aspect of the Outer God Yog-Sothoth, Mara is the Dweller on the Threshold. He is a dangerous entity who drives humans insane through temptation with their innermost desires, deftly preventing any breach of the barriers between worlds, especially Nirvana.

A multitude of Buddhists have encountered this avatar in the quest for Dharma. The will of the Key and the Gate, Mara has long been an indirect enemy of the Buddha, hampering enlightenment of his followers. Mara dwells in that place where esotericists venture. There he waits to turn them away, destroying their minds if they proceed and turning them into slaves if they give into temptation.

Guarding all entryways to secret and hidden knowledge, The Dweller on the Threshold prevents seekers of esoteric knowledge from stumbling into the interstices between dimensions and the time stream. Only slaves of Yog-Sothoth may open Gates to allow the Outer God to devour the life on this dimension. Mara maintains that entire epic.

Reincarnation (Rinne): The Great Wheel

A first Hindu and Buddhist belief in Asia, reincarnation argues that the crude matter we call the physical is not all there is. Dimensions of higher ethereal realms exist unseen to unfinished humans, and we incarnate into these many realms over and over in an endless cycle.

All sentient beings, when they first incarnate in the Earthly Realm, become three-fold in nature: the physical body spontaneously generates an etheric body, the soul. This ethereal soul comes to enjoy the experiences the illusion of life presents and becomes attached to it forming the mind, ego. When life finishes its natural cycle, the mind and soul do not desire to disperse but rather to re-experience the world of the living. The mind, or identity, disintegrates but the soul finds the unborn embryo of a creature and attaches its etheric form to undeveloped physical form, preventing the formation of a spontaneous soul. (When one does develop anyway, it is erroneously interpreted in psychology as multiple personality disorder.) And so, once again, the soul is reborn on Earth, re-incarnated.

After dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of lives replete with their moments of sorrow and joy, the soul becomes weary of the game and wishes to extract itself to a higher plane. The trouble is that the spirit is so entrenched and attached to physicality that it no longer has the will or self-discipline to break free. This is called *samsara*, the hell of reincarnation, trapped in one of the Six Realms of Worldly Desire, doomed to endless existence.

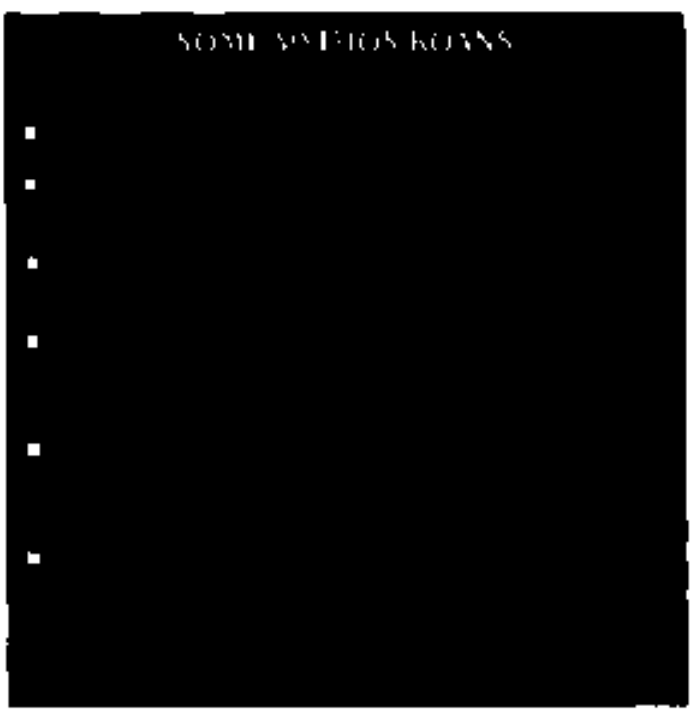
Some religions take things one step further: souls are actually divine sparks from a Godhead, inhabiting bodies on Earth to experience, learn and grow and become one again with the Creator. This extrapolation is hard to prove one way or the other. Reincarnation as a mechanism, however, is much easier to detect.

Rinne Does Not Make an Investigator Immortal

Returning to Earth with a "second chance" is almost as appealing as immortality. Even if a keeper accepts the idea that all souls reincarnate, when an investigator dies he or she is for all intents and purposes out of the scenario and the entire campaign. Why? Barring access to a cloning facility that can grow bodies in a few short months, the character's soul is reborn into an infant's body and needs to grow in the natural course of events to adulthood. (Besides, if a soul occupies a cloned body, it raises a whole new set of issues.)

THE GREAT SAFETY VALVE: A CLEAN SLATE

The only catch is that the returning soul must forgets most or all of his or her past lives. This forgetfulness is a natural bio-chemical mechanism of the human brain; a safety measure to ensure sanity and functionality. Often, the deepest and most inaccessible memories are those



of the final moments before death in the last incarnation. Remembering these traumatic events can be a catalyst for full blown insanity. If, by some dysfunction, a person suddenly regains all memories of a past life, he or she may suffer an identity crisis as the imprints of two distinct personalities and sets of memories manifest. Some cases of multiple personality disorder are mis-diagnosed full recall of past lives.

Sometimes bits and pieces of old lives do filter through, experienced as *deja vu*—the sensation of having done something or having been somewhere before. Skills may remain intact if very rusty, explaining why certain people have natural aptitudes for skills—they already had a lifetime of experience.

While the core preferences and tendencies of a reborn soul are more or less the same, many things about personality are determined by environment and upbringing, so a soul can have a totally different demeanor in two different incarnations. (Anyone watch *Dr. Who*?)

RINNE IN A GAME

Rinne, samsara, rebirth, transmigration. Buddhism holds that all sentient beings are constantly in a cycle of transmigration and rebirth.

Karma Determines Form

Karma determines just where and what a soul is reborn as. Rebirth takes place in one of the Six Realms of the universe. Listed from the most unpleasant to the most desirable, they are: Realm of the Hells, Realm of Hungry Spirits, Realm of Asuras, Realm of Beasts, Realm of Man, and the Heavenly Realm. A being can always fall or ascend these levels based on his actions and the karma incurred.

Dying for Honor

Now that since most Japanese believe in rinne, they are generally not afraid to die if the reason is compelling, hence the ancient practice of hara-kiri. However, some of the nastier Great Old Ones not only take physical life but also absorb a person's immortal life force, a fact that makes even the bravest Japanese blanch.

Q: In the *Cthulhu Japan* setting, is samsara supposed to be "real" or just a human myth?

As it's real for everyone, but only is noticeable by those looking, namely Buddhists. For Western people, it's encapsulated in concepts like "cause and effect" and "synchronicity." If you don't believe in or

Playing with Rebirth

know about samurai, is just seems to be the normal ebb and flow of life. "Things happen, y'know?"

Q: Does time happen only to certain people, such as Asian Pacific people, Dreamlands humans, or those who believe in it?

A: People can see a ghost and have it do everything but go "Boo!" and still manage to explain it away as an environmental anomaly. Believe it or don't believe it, it's still there and quite subtle in its workings. You can't prove it in the hard light of science, so who's to say? If you want to, you might consider it a balancing part of the Tao in the universe as well the "good" and "evil" in Christian beliefs. It's there, it just has different labels.

Q: Should reincarnation be an optional feature up to the keeper?

A: In the game, reincarnation is optional for foreign investigators, but should be a part of what Japanese investigators believe. Same as with the effect of karma on non-believers: it still takes effect, just the whys and wherefores are mysterious. Reincarnation can be a wonderful tool to bring back an investigator, or at least some of his or her core personality and goals, after he or she has died in the "good fight." It would explain why there is always a small group of humans fighting the Mythos and how others always seem to rise and replace the fallen: they are driven to do it by some deep karmic need. Reincarnation can make things creepy as well: "Gee, you seem familiar to me."

Buddhist Occupations

BUDDHIST PRIEST

A Japanese Buddhist priest performs funeral rites to ease the dead, and chants sutras of Buddha's universal truths to keep evil spirits at bay. The life of a Buddhist priest is not an easy one: the day begins at sun-up with morning duties, followed the rest of the day by alternating between long hours of meditation and contemplation with daily chores using full mindfulness. At the end of the day, nourishment is a simple fare; following the Buddha's teaching to harm no living thing, Buddhist priests eat a purely vegan diet. Some monks travel into the local community with only a rice bowl begging for alms to support the monastery. An old custom, lay people donate to bring good merit/karma to themselves for these small acts of generosity. Because possessions and personal appearance are the most intimate symbols of attachment to desire, most monks have no worldly possessions: their basic needs provided for by the temple or monastery. Buddhist priests shave their heads to part with the vanity of hair, and wear some variation of a simple black kimono with an orange sash on their shoulders. Monks have a clarity of perspective few modern Japanese citizens possess.

Reincarnation: Optional Background

Skills: Cultural Etiquette, Library Use, Lore (Buddhism), Meditation, Psychology, Persuade, Shōdō, and any one personal skill.

Equipment: Kasa straw hat, separate alms bowl*, five ringed shaku-jo staff*, a tome of sutras*, juzū prayer beads* and worn black cotton robes.

* See pages 146–147 for more information regarding these items.

YAMABUSHI/SHUGENSHA

Existent since around 700 C.E., Yamabushi are specialized Buddhist mountain ascetics. Practicing esoteric Buddhism through obscure chants, charms, and extreme physical hardships, they acquire magical powers with the intent to benefit the community at large. Loosely associated with the Tendai and Shingon sects, shugensha are renowned for exorcisms and martial arts skills. Making regular pilgrimages to the highest and most remote sacred mountains in Japan dressed in their very distinctive outfit, little has changed for the Yamabushi. These mountain monks do not take on the trappings of modern society, preferring instead to spend hours in rigorous ascetic rituals chanting under icy waterfalls.

Skills: First Aid, Geology, Lore (Buddhism), Martial Arts (Bo-ken), Navigate, Occult (Demons/Ghosts), Spot Hidden.

Equipment: Fez-like black hat, globe necklace, five ringed shaku-jo staff*, animal skin backpack/bedroll, tome of sutras*, juzū prayer beads* and worn white cotton robes.

* See pages 146–147 for more information regarding these items.

Reading Karma: A priest or yamabushi, due to extensive study of sutras, is able to gain a general idea of the ignorance (bad karma) and enlightenment (good karma) in himself and others, through 2D10 minutes of meditation after exposure to the target. (A successful Meditation skill roll is required.)

Related Mythos Tomes: *Doctrine of Buddha's Tears, Khabi Ripkan, Jigoku Zushi, The Mysterious Path.*

Related Spells: Army of Hell*, Bestow Karma*, Blessing the Blade (Enchant Knife), Cast out Devil, Chains to Hell*, Cleanse Ignorance (Curse of Darkness), Clear the Ignorance (Sekhmeakenhep's Words), Contact Bosatsu*, Contact Tengu*, Contact Deity/Myo*, Contact Deity/Bosatsu*, Create Charm*, Detect Enchantment, Emma-O's Karmic Fate*, Mandala of Harmony (Elder Sign), Harmony of Oneness (Resh Word), Heilgate*, Identify Spirit, Instant Enlightenment, Meditation on Truth (Journey to the Other Side), Prolong the Suffering (Healing), Restore the Balance (Banishment of YDE Enel), Reveal Cosmic Truth (Powder of Ibn-Ghazi), Sory The Cold Hells/ Hot Hells*, Sign of the Six Realms (Voorish Sign), Speak with the Damned (Command Ghost var.), Summon/Bind Hungry Ghost*, Summon/Bind Oni*, Summon/Bind Yōkai*, Sutra Of Exorcism*.

*New spells in this book: see pages 136–143 for more information.

Common Buddhist Ritual Implements*: *Butsudan*—small "Buddha-shelf" altar; *gofu*—written prayers; *hyōtan*—suitar; *juzū*—Buddhist prayer beads; *reishi*—incense; *shaku-jō*—five-ringed staff; *tepatsu*—alms bowl.

Degenerate Tantric Ritual Implements*: *dorjo/vajra* (Tibetan/Hindu)—diamond thunderbolt; *kapala* (Sanskrit)—skull alms bowl; *dungling* (Tibetan)—femur trumpet; *phurba* (Tibetan)—diamond spike.

* See pages 146–148 for more information regarding these items.

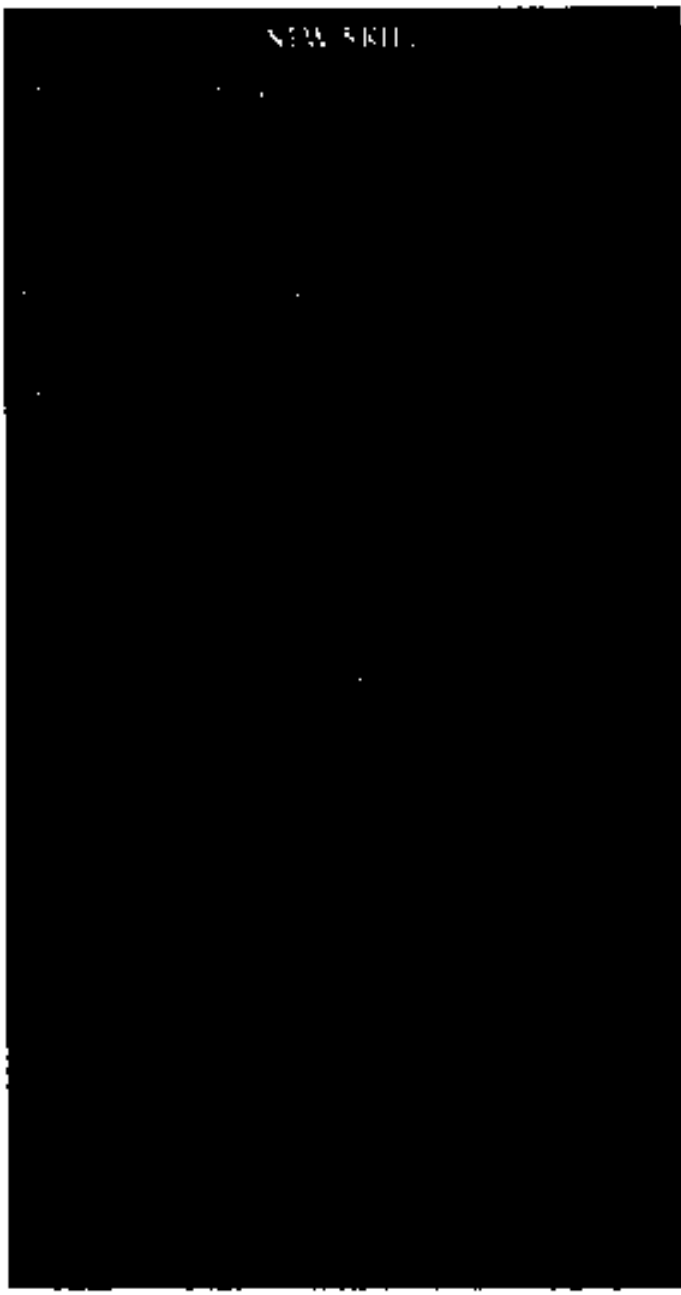
Buddhism in Game Terms

KI: MAGIC POINTS AS SPIRITUAL FORTITUDE

To a Buddhist following the path of the Awakened One, enlightenment slowly burns away previously held notions of reality. Maintaining a center without wholly losing a grip on the outside world requires great will and focus. The *ki* statistic reflects a person's spiritual attunement. Improvement of the ki score is a vital strategy needed to survive the process of enlightenment and avoid the hungry maw of insanity.

In the *Cthulhu Japan* setting, ki is simply another name for magic points. Ki points, in conjunction with Bodai (in place of the Cthulhu Mythos Skill—see page 103) act as a balancing scale: If a person actively seeks enlightenment through constant meditation, study and contemplation, that person's ki score is added to his or her current Sanity score as a bonus.

Ryusuke Ichiro has a Bodai of 25% and SAN of 50. He's on pretty shaky ground. However, with a POW of 15, his current ki is 15 points.



Ichiro has an "effective" SAN score of 65 (SAN 50 + ki 15). However, if Ichiro ever strays from the path of the Buddha and enlightenment, he loses his ki bonus and plunges head first into insanity.

Note that burning ki for spells or effects does not lower the SAN bonus. The permanent loss of POW, however, directly affects the ki score and lowers all ki values.

BODAI: MYTHOS SKILL AS ENLIGHTENMENT

Though elegantly termed as "bodai" amongst Buddhists, extinguishing all worldly attachments to learn cosmic truth—The Dharma—is in reality the Cthulhu Mythos Skill.

The greater the Bodai score in a Buddhist character, the less sane the character becomes—remember that sanity is a human measure of understanding the world. Unlike a person grasping in panic for anything recognizable along the slippery descent to insanity, Buddha found another way to comprehend the cosmic horror that is the universe. He devised a method of retraining the mind, so that when it is torn free of its moorings and cast into the cosmic ocean of nothingness it seeks not to remain attached to the illusions of human life; the mind becomes no-mind, allowing the spirit freedom to understand the universe. The instinctual gestalt tendency of a person to impose a framework shatters the mind when reality strains beyond that acceptable framework. Buddhists have a mortal shell but gradually become outside observers to the endless cycle and pain of rebirth. Through careful training and meditation, the enlightened person has created a whole new perception of reality. The person is no longer really human but cunningly exists within human societies.

SANITY AND ENLIGHTENMENT

To the perceptions of untrained mortals, those who are enlightened or on the path of bodai no longer cherish human values or goals like preservation and love. Keeping "human-ness" intact is an eternal enigma that some Buddhist sects have struggled to solve. Thus the Zen koan "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" Seekers replace Sanity with enlightenment; the price they pay is that they become alien and cold to the plight of humanity, caring only for ascending with fellow aspirants around them and not for the general welfare of humanity.

Those of the orders who seek to follow the path of self advancement quickly cross paths with Mara. If they fail the test, they stagnate in their quest or become degenerate Buddhists who hold only Dharma to esteem. Much worse are the Duggas who, instead of seeking balance, use the Cthulhu Mythos itself for enlightenment rather than some human based compassionate model as suggested by the Shakyamuni Buddha.

COMPASSION AND REFORM

There have been several attempted reforms during the history of Buddhism in Japan. The Pure Land Sects extol the virtues of the Amida Buddha and await the Pure Land, Jodo. These "versions" of Buddhism aim toward compassion and salvation for the masses. They have only been partially successful.

The goal of the Dharma-Kaya Buddha, who holds open the Gate to Nirvana, is clear: Aid all humanity in attaining enlightenment and joining him in Nirvana. Buddhism spreads it quickly amongst the masses like a virus but a method incorporating compassion like Jodo Buddhism does not.

STIRRING BOSATSU INTO THE MIX

The Bodhisattva, or Bosatsu, are still in some sense human, though most would find their motivations and goals unfathomable unless they too were on the path to enlightenment. The only clear goal of these beings is to encourage humanity to find enlightenment and join the Buddha in Nirvana, free from the suffering of rebirth.

GAINING POW

Buddhist priests can gain POW in several ways:

- When casting spells they gain POW exactly as sorcerers listed in the "Magic" chapter of the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook under "How Sorcerers Get That Way."
- Certain sutras and sacred items must be meditated upon by a seeker of Dharma. Along with the requisite Mythos knowledge (Bodai) gained, the seeker also has the chance to gain 1D3 POW through the means in which they study the item. (The time involved is 1D6 times longer than that listed for the item via conditional reading.)
- Whenever a Buddhist willfully seeks out The Buddha or a Bodhisattva for enlightenment, the experience may gain them Cthulhu Mythos points (Bodai) and 1D4 POW for enduring the experience.
- To successfully confront Mara unscathed is worth a 1D3 POW award by the keeper (as per the Luck gain of POW).

Meditation and Sanity, Another Option

Much more modest is the use of the Meditation skill: for every 8 points of Sanity lost due to an increase in Cthulhu Mythos/Enlightenment, the meditator may try to use the Meditation skill to gain 1 POW. The time this takes is up to the keeper but it might be done between scenarios. Sanity is not regained but the seeker has reflected on his change in world view and incorporated it into learning the Path of Buddha, his spiritual resolve strengthening.

亭国の神道

State Shinto

After the day of black tears, a new generation of Japanese will be born, no longer children of the sun but also children of the future. Their determination will rebuild the nation, but not without deep wounds and lasting scars. Not without a great price, for they will place hope and faith in the embrace of cold metal and ropes of lightning. This work will be the stuff of dreams.

—Shimura Taizan/The Book of Myth.

Known as "Shinto" since the importation of Buddhism in the sixth century C.E., the indigenous religion of Japan is also known by a more ancient term—*kami no michi*, "the way of the gods."

Few can actually pinpoint when Shintoism first arose in Japan, but it easily predates the arrival of Buddhism. Shinto is believed to date many centuries back—at least to the middle of the first millennium B.C.E. At this time the first agrarian societies settled on the Japanese Archipelago and began to push out the first settlers of Japan, the Caucasoid Ainu peoples.

PRINCESS AMATERASU, SORCERER PRIESTESS

GREATER KAMI—AMATERASU (SHOWN IN ANCIENT MIKOKO GARB)

Kami no michi in its original form encompassed a whole range of practices including nature worship, shamanism, fertility cults, divination and worship of famous heroes. The animist aspect of the religion worships the forces of nature as divine. This divinity is embodied as *kami*, gods which exist within the rocks, the trees, the mountains, the sea. Kami inhabit all things both living and inanimate, the greatest inhabiting the sun and moon and other celestial forces. In ancient times, when the Japanese were pure and in tune with nature, they could see the multitude of spirits glimmering within every animal and plant, each having a unique voice with which to speak. Over time, only the shamanesses maintained this rapport with the kami, and eventually could only do so within the sanctity of dedicated shrines on sacred places of power.

Before Buddhism, Shinto unfolded all things, having no doctrines, founder, specific philosophy or moral codes. It was forced to define itself when the developed doctrines and beliefs of the Buddha arrived in the capital of Nara in the sixth century. Adopting the name of Shinto to distinguish the native religion of Japan from the foreign religions of Buddhism and Confucianism, it soon the less gradually became a syncretic faith, embracing Buddhist deities and rituals into its own traditions. Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines shared the same compound around sacred sites. Soon, Buddhist priests began to preside over Shinto rites. But Shinto was not subsumed by the new faith; rather it maintained its importance with the Japanese peoples by transforming into a shrine faith overseen by a priestly class who replaced the ancient clan shamanesses.

Aims of Shinto

The principal reason Shinto maintains its importance to the people of Japan is its intimate ties with the cycle of daily life, national identity and the cultural attitudes of the Japanese peoples. Highly dependent upon rice for their entire history, the Japanese people's seasonal festivals for planting and harvest have always been vital to appease and petition the kami for favor.

The head of the Shinto kami, Amaterasu, a sun goddess, exemplifies the "sunny" disposition of Shinto faith: The divine, human and natural all exist in a state of harmony. Humans are naturally good and pure; evil stems from impurity and pollution from *outside* sources. Corruption severs the primal bond with universal harmony.

Shinto further defined itself through *The Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* and the *Nihon Shoki (Chronicle of Japan)*. Both written in the eighth century C.E., they legitimized the Shinto creation myth of the Japanese islands by the kami *Izanagi* and his mate *Izanami*. *Izanagi*, dipping his spear in the ocean (generally assumed to be Izanami), created the islands. The two kami went on to birth an entire

SHINTO INFLUENCED MYTHOS ARTIFACTS

SHINTO RPG CORE CONCEPTS

神

KAMI (KAH-MEE)

KAMI ATTACKS

TYPES OF KAMI ENCOUNTERS

鳥居

TORII (TORE-REE)

幸運

KYU-MEI-GI (SHOW-MEE-GEE)

pantheon of gods headed by sun goddess Amaterasu, who in turn gave birth to the first emperor of Japan, beginning an imperial family which exists in an unbroken line to the present day. Living emperors fulfill the role of head priest of the Shinto faith. These two books further detail a simple dualistic cosmology detailing Yamato, the High Plain of Heaven and Yomi, the grey land of the dead.

With a focus on the life cycle, it should not be surprising that Shinto's religious emphasis has remained upon celebration of life and the art of living, shifting the role of Buddhism in Japanese culture to deal with issues of death and dying. Shinto priests oversee blessings for births, marriages, and new endeavors in the community such as businesses.

Shinto inspires a deep respect for life, grow one in the power and beauty of nature *(musubi)* and a desire for purity in all things, outward cleanliness and inward sincerity *(makoto)*.

Types of Kami

While translated as "god" into other languages, kami scarcely carry the connotations of supremacy, ascendancy, and omnipotence found in Western deities. Put quite simply, kami embody a force or spirit in anything extraordinary, awe inspiring, or sacred. It is said that every person on earth can trace their lineage ultimately back to a kami, thus all humans are "children of the kami."

The demeanor of kami is generally neutral and in harmony with all things they represent. Japanese see kami as mostly benevolent, their role in Japan to preserve and sustain the land. Most kami are more or less peaceful as long as they are appeased and respected, or at the very least avoided. Ignoring kami, however, is not wise, as it can incur wrathful destructive behavior resulting in death, disease, pestilence, and natural calamity.

LESSER KAMI

Lesser Kami (Kankyo-Kami)

Kami can be divided into several classifications, the most basic being natural objects and living beings. Kami exist for oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains, rocks, forests and even animals—foxes, wolves, bears, rabbits, and crows, just to name a few.

ANCESTRAL KAMI (Sosen-Kami)

Another type of kami are guardians of clans, families or places. These kami explain the worship of deceased ancestors, great personages, heroes and emperors. Some speculate this "ancestor worship" was incorporated into Shinto after Chinese Taoism and other mainland influences arrived in Japan.

ANCESTRAL KAMI

GREATER KAMI (Amatsu-Kami)

The third type of kami personify abstract concepts such as fertility, weather, and war. Kami such as Amaterasu the sun goddess, her brother Susano-Wo the storm god, Hachiman the god of war and others fill the Japanese pantheon.

MYTHOS ORIGINS OF THE KAMI

Sorcerer Priestess Amaterasu, her father and mother, Izunagi and Izunami, as well as an extended clan of elite powerful spellcasters, summoned mammoth Gateways to save the Japanese, the Yayoi, from doom on Mu. The cost of channeling all this Mythos energy through their bodies disintegrated their physical forms, but not before they were able to perform one last powerful rite, one which consumed the priests' immortal souls and changed them forever.

Amaterasu was a compassionate, if detached, princess of the Clan of the Sun. Of imperial Muvian blood, she desired a means to watch over and protect her peoples. Her mortal shell dying, the only solution was to perform a powerful rite merging her energies with the land itself, forming an unbreakable bond, forever metamorphosing the incarnating immortal soul. Binding herself to the sun and the land, the great Muvian sorceress Amaterasu became the first kami, losing all but a remnant of her old human consciousness—the instinctual desire to protect her descendants.

With no option except total dissolution of body and soul, the rest of the weakened and dying Muvian sorcerers followed suit. Left only the native raw materials on the island chains to carry on, within a few generations the Yayoi forgot the kindred spirits in the kami and came to worship these mysterious powerful unseen entities. Only those of the imperial line, surviving in Amaterasu's grandson, remembered the secret and the great sacrifice of the kami.

ITAKO (FAR LEFT) SUMMONING KAMI (TOP)

THE LAZY AND DERIVATIVE APPROACH

The names of the greater kami—Amaterasu, Susano-Wo and Hachiman—may be Japanese corruptions of names of wizards such as Ygoth, Iraan, and Zanthu, or they may be the names of undocumented wizard priests of the Great Old One Ghatanothoa. They may even be Great Old Ones.

NATURE OF KAMI

As ethereal entities, kami are composed purely of willpower and life force. A kami who tries to affect the physical world must expend his or her own essence, something which regenerates only with worship. The original Muvian sorcerers could not have foreseen that their kami forms would come to rely on POW and ki (magic points) to regenerate—life force as fuel. They unintentionally became, in some sense, vampiric entities.

Human worship of kami involves the voluntary transfer of ki, usually only one or two points at a time, through the symbolic placement of offerings such as fresh blood and drink at the shrine altar. (Donated magic points are regained normally in sleep.) POW can be unintentionally donated if a kami is desperate or unstable. Coma or even death can result if a human continues worship while a kami drains POW. All kami naturally regenerate POW like a person does magic points as long as they are actively worshiped. Less powerful kami are cautious with POW use. Note that greater kami have, on average, 60 POW; this should be viewed as a reserve that is constantly being replenished by unconscious veneration by worshipers.

If a kami is drained to 0 POW, it immediately withdraws to the etheric plane and goes into hibernation. There it stays until a follower sacrifices enough magic points in the form of altar offerings to help the kami regenerate and regain sentience at 5 POW. If a kami ceases to be worshiped but still possesses POW, it becomes a vengeful spirit, a *ko-jin* or *aryo*, who wreaks havoc, desperate for POW until placated with offerings. If a kami is forgotten completely and drops to 0 POW it effectively ceases to exist.

神の魔術

KAMI MAGIC (Kami no Mahoh)

TAKING A CHANCE

Considering their great potential power, both temporal and physical, it is for good reason that hundreds of generations of Shinto shamans and priestesses have risked the inherent dangers of other worldly communication with the alien kami entities. Using meditative states of channeling and summoning, trained human intuitives have long functioned as vessels and mediators for the kami. Tapping into the energies of the kami is no small risk, at times on par with dabbling with Mythos entities. It is important to understand that "kami magic" is not magic in the conventional sense of the word; there is never "something from nothing." In reality, it is a bartering of POW and ki (magic points) between the human medium and the kami entity to achieve effects in the physical world, be it for a spell effect or divining the future.

THE GIFT OF LIFE

All kami can invest mortals with extra POW or ki at a cost to their own personal POW. There usually has to be a very good reason for doing so: furthering important aims of the kami in the physical world for example. POW represents a kami's prime essence and would be like giving blood to another. Kami can perform all manner of preternatural feats, termed ESP in modern parlance, dependent upon the

amount of free POW available to them and if the loss doesn't directly endanger their well-being.

Dangerous Ground

Less pleasant kami of the *arumi-tama* group, also called *kn-jin*, not only harass the living but in rare cases can drain a mortal of all ki and then begin to drain 1 POW per night. This induces a comatose state in the target, and if the drain is maintained by the kami to 0 POW, it leads to death.

Belief is Power

Japanese can resist the influence of a kami by rolling their POW on the Resistance Table against the current POW of the kami. Non-believers of Shinto need only roll against half the current POW of the kami in question, as they do not hold a subconscious belief in kami. Mortals can also overcome the will of a powerful kami by expending a permanent point of POW, costing the kami 1D10 POW from backlash.

Noh Masks

Kami do not have preferred physical forms or even remember their old mortal ones (for those who were once human). Kami can take on any appearance, but often choose a form that reinforces a worshiper's concept of what they might look like. This ability costs 1 POW per scene to maintain the shape and visibility. They usually also induce physical effects like wind and rain for added impact.

Shinto Worship

Three Elements of Worship

All forms of Shinto worship consist of three vital steps.

Purification *(Misogi)*—To be ritually pure is vital in the Shinto faith. Purity represents a clear connection with the divine. In most cases, purification is performed in a ritual of cleansing with water. Just within the gate *(torii)* demarcating the sacred shrine grounds, a clean water basin awaits worshipers. Metal cups on long wooden dowels are dipped into the clean water and poured in sequence over the left hand, the right and then the mouth is rinsed. (All of this waste water is spilled in a drain, *not* back into the basin.)

Prayer/Petition—Upon reaching the main shrine, a Shinto believer stands in front of a closed door housing the essence of the

SHINTO WATER BASIN

The Great Experiment

The Great Experiment was the act that spelled the doom of the Mu'ian civilization. Many Mythos scholars put the blame for Mu's demise firmly on the folly of the wizard priest Zanthu's attempt to raise Yhogtha. In actuality, Mu's fate was set when its two races of inhabitants, humans and serpent people, chose to bind their destinies tightly together. Quite literally, the goal was to create a new species greater than the sum of the original human and serpent races. The goal was performed in stages. In the first, all citizens of the Golden Empire of the Sun participated in a magical experiment using high enchantments to merge genetic material in blood rites. Next, the most powerful wizard priests magically melded the lifeforces of several powerful imperial sorcerers. The offspring of these magical matings were serpent-human hybrids. But something had gone horribly wrong; growth in short bursts, these hybrids were frail in body but possessed highly developed mental capacities. Possessing magical abilities far beyond both progenitor races, they contacted Yig and mocked him. Yig was enraged at the affront and the corruption of his chosen race. He called upon another Great Old One to lay waste to Mu, forever ending the dreams of the Mu'ians. However, the survivors of Mu established the Yayoi culture in Japan. Mu'ian blood burns in the veins of modern Japanese, blood not fully human, but most definitely unique.

THE DESTRUCTION AND EVACUATION OF ANCIENT MU

kami. Often dangling in front of the shrine entrance is thick twine rope attached at the top to a massive bell and ending in a tassel. The standard practice is to tug the rope to make a racket and rouse the kami. The person next claps his or her hands together twice, making a silent prayer or petition to the kami. The ritual complete, an offering is then given.

(Anamorphic depictions of kami are rare: an item or object usually sits upon an altar open to public viewing only on festival days. Even Amaterasu is represented by a simple bronze mirror.)

Offerings—Offerings are tendered upon reaching the main shrine building. In the modern day, a wooden collection box takes money offerings. In the past, offerings of rice, water, and food were not uncommon. Some offerings are in the form of paper fortunes, talisman *o-fuda*, or even the lighting of candles or incense.

FORMS OF WORSHIP

Japanese enact rites of worship to kami to express thanks and to petition for their continued patronage. Shinto worship manifests in many ways.

O-MIKOSHI

Festivals (Matsuri)

Chief among ways to show appreciation for resident kami are by festivals. The most well known are large community affairs to herald fall harvest, spring planting, or a famous historic event such as *Setsubun* on March 3rd to drive oni out of the house. Festivals often begin at an opening ceremony at a shrine to a specific kami. Community leaders form teams and carry *o-mikoshi*, portable shrines, usually hefted upon the shoulders of the teams and carried along a prescribed route through town. O-mikoshi vary in size and materials: some are simple wooden litters lifted by four men; some mikoshi are six stories high, covered in gold thread costing hundreds of thousands of dollars and hefted by teams of a hundred plus men. The other community members cheer on the o-mikoshi teams, offering beer and refreshments, dancing, and playing music. Festivals often reach a fever pitch of chants, and shaking the o-mikoshi in wild gesticulations with the goal of attracting the kami to inhabit the portable shrine for a time. Festivals of this sort often go on for days and in larger ones such as in Saijô, Japan where 50,000+ people gather, one or two fatalities almost always occur by the end of the festival due to trampling or being crushed by the o-mikoshi.

Shrine Worship

Not all Shinto worship takes the course of festivals; some is quiet and solemn, involving only a family and the Shinto priest. Other rituals are celebrated at home in front of a small shrine, a *kami-dana* (god shelf) containing planks with the names of ancestors now considered to be part of the clan kami. Prayers are done, offerings are made and candles are lit to the clan kami. At a local community shrine, rites can be quick and light-hearted, taking only a minute or so to complete.

TORII, GATEWAYS INTO THE SACRED

When entering a shrine, one must pass through a *torii*, a special gateway for the kami. Torii demarcate the barrier between the normal mundane world and the sacred world of the gods.

Flanking the main entrance torii are *koma-inu*, guardian lion-dogs. Shinto places great respect upon animal messengers for the kami. *Kitsune*, foxes, are regarded as the highest and act as the chosen messengers of *Inari*, the rice god.

THE PRICE OF THE GATES

When the Muvian sorcerer priestess Amaterasu and her ilk opened the massive dimensional portals from the sinking continent of Mu to the Japanese archipelago, they enabled the safe passage of hundreds of thousands of Muvian citizens who created the Yayoi culture. As a consequence of opening these powerful Gateways, the equatorial reality of the Japanese island chain was destabilized. Though 15,000 years have passed, the flux in the Earth Realm has never really settled. Partially, this is due to the continual presence of kami, which are now bonded to every physical component in the region and which bestow a spiritual component to inanimate objects. Reality has never been able to heal properly with kami around. The dimensional instability is strongest on the *ryu michi* energy lines in the earth.

Physically gifted shamans erected torii on these *ryumyaku*, nexus points of power, never realizing that the very shape and form of the torii gates were themselves a remnant of Muvian high technology. The thousands of torii erected across the face of Japan have become passive portals, further ensuring the unstable dimensional composition of the Land of the Rising Sun. It might be of worth noting that the detonation of the two A-bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki succeeded in further damaging the space-time matrix, causing hundreds of temporal and dimensional rifts between Earth and Yomi, the Land of the Dead (Realm of Hungry Spirits), within those cities.

Thick braided twine rope draped with distinctive *origami* (folded paper) is often used to demarcate a sacred site too small for a torii. An example is a rope wrapped around the base of an ancient tree or awe inspiring boulder. These sacred ropes are often additionally hung between the pillars of torii and at the front two beams of a shrine. In large shrines, the diameter of the rope can reach impressive size, easily dwarfing a man.

TORII (NOTE TWINE ROPE WITH ORIGAMI, AND KOMA-INU STATUES)

SHRINES (Jinja)

Constructed purely from natural materials, shrines are important structures which guard and protect sacred sites believed to be the abodes of kami. It's interesting to note that shrines are meant to house kami spirits, not shelter Shinto practitioners.

SHINTO SHRINE

Many shrine grounds are maintained by the attending Shinto priest, or *kannushi*, who lives in a house nearby. Priests are attended by *miko*, young virgin girls dressed in white kimono and red-orange hakama skirts. At the shrine, miko often sell good luck charms, *o-mamori*, that are worn for healing and protection. Miko also play the koto harp and perform ritual dances, *kagura*, during festivals on the shrine grounds. Miko help the priest clean and maintain the shrine grounds.

DREAMY GATES

Occasionally, at certain auspicious times of the year, the shrine archways, torii, in some Shinto shrines will open into the Dreamlands. Once in the Dreamlands, a second shrine torii leads to the kami's abode in the Realm of Heavenly Beings. Investigators who interview the local populace and read up on old wives' tales and myths in the area can discover likely torii locations and what times these Gateways are open. The times these Gates open are most often during the festival days in honor of their kami, called matsuri in Japanese. There is a fifty percent chance that these Gates function in one of two ways, either as the spell Gate of Oneiroloige or Gate of Dreams.

The Ten Thousand Red Gates

At the foot of mountains circling the historic city of Kyoto there exists a shrine to the kami Inari, the rice god. What sets this Shinto shrine apart from the hundreds of other temple and shrine complexes in Kyoto is entry into Inari Shrine requires passage through ten thousand red shrine gates, torii, arranged in a tunnel. At the end of this tunnel sit two guardian kitsune statues, Japanese foxes.

Types of Shinto

Today it is estimated that over 40% of the Japanese people actively practice Shinto in one form or another, a figure of sixty million adherents. Another estimate puts 85% of the Japanese populace practicing some combination of Shinto and Buddhism, placing the number of Shinto practitioners at one hundred and twenty million. Roughly one hundred years ago, the religion of Shinto was officially divided into the following four forms.

JINJA/SHRINE SHINTO

The largest group, Jinja comprises Shinto as it has existed since its founding in the distant past. In the buildup before World War II it became intertwined with the now defunct State Shinto. Nearly every shrine in Japan is a registered member of the *Jinja Honcho*, an association of shinto shrines which acts as a registry and census office.

SECTARIAN SHINTO (KYOHA)

Composed of thirteen Kyoha sects, these are charismatic Shinto groups founded by individuals during the Meiji period at the turn of the nineteenth century C.E.; they resemble "new" religions.

FOLK SHINTO

With no formal organization or doctrine, Folk Shinto is a catch-all for thousands of local and regional rituals and practices. Folk Shinto encompasses family rituals performed in the privacy of the home in front of the kami-dana and tiny roadside shrines no larger than a shoebox in remote places.

FOLK SHINTO HOME ALTAR

STATE SHINTO

A form of Shinto promoted by the military and ruling class in the 1920s through the 1940s. Taught in school and eventually propounded in every sector of society, State Shinto was pervasive, shaping the attitudes of a generation. State

KAMI AND THE GREAT OLD ONES

As most greater kami were former Mu'ian wizards and sorcerers, they are acutely aware of the menace the Great Old Ones and the Outer Gods pose to humanity. The greatest irony in their roles as self appointed guardians to the Land of Rising Sun is their total ineffectiveness in protecting the Japanese from the predations of Mythos entities. Kami are quite simply "tuned" in the spiritual source of their power, the people and land, limits what they can do to Mythos beings. While no truce or agreement exists per se between Mythos entities and the kami, kami rarely intercede on the behalf of people against Great Old Ones. It's simply a matter of common sense on the part of the kami, who perceive corporeal beings like Cthulhu as unbearable. Kami are not indifferent to the threat of Cthulhu and other Great Old Ones, they are simply expedient. In terms of physical attacks, unless all greater kami combine forces, little harm can be inflicted upon Great Old Ones. Most kami try not to attract the attention of vastly more powerful beings that could drain their lifeforce like ethereal batteries.

Shinto worshiped the emperor of Japan as a living god. The emperor's loyal subjects should be willing to fight and defend their nation. State Shinto was used as a vehicle to stir extreme ultranationalism and to fuel unquestioning loyalty to the party line, which was aggressive colonialism in the Asian theater. (Buddhism, with the exception of certain Zen sects, suffered heavy persecution from State Shinto during the war years.)

With the defeat of Japan in 1945, the Allied Occupation Forces headed by General MacArthur dismantled any social structure seen as contributing to the pre-war aggression. State Shinto was one of the first institutions to be dissolved. The first action was the famous denouncement by Emperor Hirohito on national radio of his status as a living god, a kami.

Ryu Michi & Rensa

Straddling the earth like a natural circuit board, or perhaps more aptly, a nervous system, *ryu michi* are recognized across many cultures worldwide. In China they are called *dragon paths* and are harnessed within the craft of *Feng Shui (Fu Sui* in Japanese). In the United Kingdom, the druids called them *ley lines*, conduits of power. In Japan, they are ryu michi, and Japan is laced with numerous powerful networks of them. Ryu michi provide pathways of least resistance for spiritual and etheric forces traveling the earth. They carry the ki of the planet.

IMPERIAL LEGACY: HIGH MUVIAN SORCERY

Because of the Great Experiment, all Japanese citizens are intimately, if unknowingly, linked to their distant past as descendants of Muvian survivors. Hundreds of generations have served to dilute the bloodlines of most Japanese, but the imperial bloodline has carefully maintained pure heritage by intermarrying and selectively breeding. The result is that the emperor and his kin remain strong in their bloodlink to the Muvian high wizard priests and ancient priestesses who ruled them. Some ancient texts worldwide recognize this bloodline, calling them children of the "fallen race," the *nephilim*. Mythos scholars posit that the Muvian bloodline may be present in every line of royalty in the world.

Having the emperor fill the office as high priest of Shinto is no mistake of history or politics. Rather, it is a purposeful effort to maintain a solid link to the kami and the imperial Muvian blood. But emperors do not need to use guesswork to determine the purity of their bloodline. The Imperial Regalia, sacred Shinto objects and symbols of the state, are themselves Muvian relics. The Mirror at Amaterasu shows a reflection for those of Muvian blood. The purer the lineage, the more solid the reflection. (This may contribute to the obsession with purity in the Shinto faith.) A foreigner, by contrast, would not be reflected in the artifact. In fact, the rite of coronation at Amaterasu's Shrine is for each fledgling emperor is in part a ritual to verify the purity of blood, the suitability to rule, within the candidate.

Rensa

Where ryu michi cross, natural nexus points form, *rensa*, much like crossroads. Intuitive and spiritually sensitive shamans and priests have wisely chosen these spots of power to place sacred temples and shrines. In fact, one of the seven most powerful nexus points on Earth exists centered on Mount Fuji near Tokyo, Japan. (Other major nexus points include Stonehenge in England and the Temple of the Oracle at Delphi).

Causes

No one factor can be attributed to the startling array of ryu michi in Japan. Located at the conjunction of three continental tectonic plates, the Japanese island chain rests in the midst of the Ring of Fire. The great migration of the Yayoi people from their old home of Mu caused great damage to the fabric of reality due to the opening of massive dimensional portals to transport hundreds of thousands of people at once. The presence of kami may also contribute to the prolific number of ryu michi and rensa.

Like Attracts . . .

The consequences of the ryu michi are many. Like a river, these paths of power attract many phenomena and entities. Shinto shrines are often wisely placed upon rensa to cap them like volcanoes. Marking off places of power as a sacred space of calm and reverence often keeps disturbances in check. The problems of ryu michi are manifold. While ryu michi and rensa are often inhabited by kami, the ethereal energies are unguided and are easily shaped by random thoughts of latent psychics and intuitives. Fu Sui experts prefer rensa to work their rituals and spells. When a rensa is overloaded, free energy spills forth, resulting in the formation of chaotic yōkai or the summoning of ghostly yūrei.

Systems

Ryu michi act as POW and ki (magic point) conduits. Those able to find and identify ryu michi might be able to find some way to tap into them. The problem is, like a warm comfy cave, it's more than likely that something is already feeding upon or inhabiting a nearby rensa. A kami may be distinctly unhappy that someone is stealing its "food."

RYU MICHI FOR THE KEEPER

Keepers might allow investigators to tap into the resident power of ryu michi or rensa in a pinch but should put a few obstacles in the way of this becoming common practice.

Where Is It?

Finding a place of power can be the most challenging hurdle. Characters need something that can detect ki or else must take a wild guess by going to a shrine and hoping it is a rensa as well.

I Was Here First!

Most if not all rensa are already the refuge of kami or other entities like tengu or ratsu dependent upon ki for survival in this reality. Investigators desiring to tap into rensa may find themselves confronting an angry kami. It is up to the keeper to determine what happens next.

Tapping Ki

Assuming that a rensa or ryu michi is free of habitation, an investigator can try to tap into it either via a magical item, ritual, or by touching the strongest place of power. However, to begin the process requires a roll of the rensa's POW rating versus the character's POW. Obviously, a small shrine is easier to drain of POW. Once this initial resistance is overtaken, a character may drain the rensa of its ki.

Backlash

A powerful nexus like a national shrine is dangerous to tap into. Winning the POW roll is the first hurdle. A character may only absorb ki up to double their normal score before passing out and losing consciousness in a state of sheer ecstasy. (Psychosis may result if ki flows too quickly.) Ki continues to flow, however, spawning yôkai and the like to munch on the unconscious investigator.

Rensa Ki & POW

That said, the following are some suggestions for power levels of rensa:

- **Small Shrines/Sacred Spots.** A small shrine or sacred spot like an ancient tree might flow with 6 ki/2 POW every hour.
- **Normal Shrines.** Community shrines and sacred natural features like venerated boulders yield 3 ki/1 POW every 15 minutes.
- **National Shrines/Revered Features.** National shrines dedicated to Amaterasu at Ise or to Emperor Meiji at Meiji Jingu brim with power, placed as they are on major rensa points. Likewise, an ancient tree at one of the oldest shines in Japan at O-Mishima Island is said to be 3,000 years old. Places of such veneration and power can be tapped for 3 ki/1 POW per minute.

Shinto Occupations

HEREDITARY YÔKAI HUNTER

As there are hereditary schools for martial arts and performing arts, those with a knowledge of the old ways pass on such responsibilities to the new generation—who often are unaware of the family secret at first. Yôkai are manifestations of evil in the land and it is a hunter's job to quietly remove these threats without the public at large knowing. They often study parapsychology to aid them in their work.

Skills: Bushidô, Cultural Etiquette, Lore (choose one—Buddhist or Shinto), Hide, Martial Arts (choose one), Occult (Yôkai), Parapsychology, Urban Navigation.

Equipment: Custom titanium katana (hidden in Buddhist shaku-jo staff), Kevlar body armor, occult reference book, *mayoke* charms, *gohei* (Shinto prayer wand), incense, sutras, paper *o-fuda* to put on the forehead of o-bake and bind them, long leather trench coat and boots.

YÔKAI HUNTER

SHINTO PRIEST (KANNUSHI)

Kannushi, priests of the native Japanese religion who deal with kami (spirits) of powerful ancestors and, effectively, the gods who watch over the welfare of the Japanese people. Shinto priests deal with services that promote life. They are often in the community performing blessings for newly born children and the opening ceremonies for new buildings. Shinto priests also organize annual matsuri festivals, and community groups. Shinto priests wear the tall black cap of their station and pure white kimonos.

Skills: Craft (Shrine Charms), Cultural Etiquette, Lore (Shinto), Occult, Psychology, Shôdô, and any two personal skills.

Equipment: Register of names of all residents around local shrine, gohei prayer wand, o-fuda, mayoke, and white cotton kimono and hat.

SHINTÔ PRIEST

NEW SKILL

CHANNEL SPIRIT (05%)

In the shrines with only shrine maidens as witnesses, priests act as channels for the kami to inhabit and proclaim their will and wisdom. This can be dangerous, as the person has no control over the possession; they must depend on the kami to be benign, and to release the body after the session. It's probably for this reason only specific kami are invoked again and again.

With this ability, a person can try to be a receptacle for a spirit of any type to speak through. This spirit can be a dead person, a kami, or even a non-terrestrial being. The channeler will name the entity contact is desired with and go into a trance for 3D6 minutes. After spending 1 Ki (magic point) and rolling his or her skill roll, the keeper determines if the spirit has come through for the channeler. Note that a 96-00 on the roll is a catastrophic failure and something else comes through other than the desired entity. Upon arrival of an entity, the channeler may also have to roll an appropriate Sanity check for mentally contacting that creature.

A character with this skill can also perceive an astral serpent (see pages 248–250) after making a successful skill check.

ITAKO

ITAKO

Supplanted from center stage by the Yamabushi with the arrival of Buddhism in 700 C.E., they are blind female Shinto shamanesses who have been given the gift of supernatural sight for the loss of their natural ability. They serve as mediums for kami, nature spirits, and the departed to inhabit. Itako act as an interface for the public and kamisama. They are famous for prognostication: many mothers and older people come to them for comfort. They soothe the worries of average people about the status of their ancestors. Itako wear the white and orange kimono of a Shinto shrine maiden.

Skills: Channel Spirit, Cultural Etiquette, Listen, Lore (Shinto), Occult (Ancestors), Persuade, Psychology, and any one personal skill.

Equipment: Gohei prayer wand, o-fuda, mayoke, and white cotton kimono with orange hakama skirt.

Related Mythos Tomes: *Shinwa Taizen (Ribēn De Wǎnggǔo)*

Related Spells: Amaterasu's Gaze*, Ancestral Ward (Elder Sign), Awaken The Great Tortoise*, Contact Deity/Greater Kami*, Contact Kitsune*, Contact Tatsu*, Create Ancestor Spirit*, Create Charm*, Create Yōkai* Detect Enchantment, Dragon's Wrath*, Enchant Ink*, Enchant Kami Shrine*, Eye of Inari (Blight/Bless Crop), Hunger of Kazan*, Light of the Sun (Augur), Purity Of The Blood*, Summon/Bind Lesser Kami*, Summon/Bind Yōkai*, Susano-Wo's Wrath (Alter Weather—Call Forth Typhoon).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Common Shinto Ritual Implements*: *Ema, gofu,* and *mayoke*—sacred charms; *gōhei*—Shinto wand; *kamidana* and *onusemana*—personal kami altar and offerings table; *o-mikoshi*—portable shrines; *shimenawa*—sacred rope; *tamagushi*—fresh sprig of leaves from sacred sakaki or cypress tree.

* See pages 145–146 for more information regarding these items.

Other Perspectives

KOTODAMA

The art of naming is ancient, possibly going back to Muvian times. Properly practiced, it is one of the most potent forms of magic available to humans. Other parts of the world have known similar systems using "true names." Some, like the Kabbala, are as ancient as Kotodama. Newer systems, like Enochian magic, deal in similar themes of summoning and commanding non-terrestrial beings through the use of naming.

Kotodama has its basis in the belief that the actual words of the Japanese language hold power. When the symbols of Chinese kanji and Japanese hiragana script are written down in the proper rituals, it becomes possible to shape reality through sympathetic magic. When the universe was first created, each and every thing was given a *true name*. Through the ages, the true names were corrupted or forgotten, but each thing in the universe still bears this mystical mark of creation. To discover the true name of a thing is to gain power over it. Combined with the innate power of the written language of Japanese, the use of true names is potent indeed.

Kotodama saw its golden age in the Heian Period of Japan's history. In this era, when Lady Murasaki wrote *Genji Monogatari*, decadent court nobles relied heavily on esoteric magic to spy on rivals. Between composing prose on rose petals and the ephemeral beauty of a court lady, aristocrats employed the services of Kotodama masters to gain a supernatural edge in daily life, and Kotodama masters charged dearly for their services.

Like many crafts in Japan, Kotodama came to be passed down within families in a patriarchal fashion. Due to the nature of the innate power of naming, most such Kotodama clans were quite secretive about themselves. Obviously, if a rival Kotodama clan knew the names of the other clan members, it could be used in sympathetic magic. Clans kept many of the secrets of their craft within a clan tome that was hidden within the family's shrine of the guardian uji-gami.

It should go without saying that a Kotodama master must also be a skilled linguist in his native tongue, Japanese, in both written and spoken forms. A Japanese practitioner must have at least 85 percentiles in the Own Language skill. The keeper decides whether or not a non-Japanese may have this power.

Initiation

A new practitioner must perform a ritual of true naming to discover his or her own true name as given by creation. This is a very private and tiring ceremony. Expending 1 POW, the initiate sits in a room and writes every kanji character known to him or her, usually 20,000, over and over on the walls. This initial exercise has a 5% chance of revealing the person's true name. If successful, certain symbols on the wall glow and spell out the name. If unsuccessful right away, the initiate expends 1 magic point every hour, each time adding 5 percentiles to the threshold of the next hourly roll until he or she succeeds. After such a torturous ordeal, the wise Kotodama master tells that name to no one but his or her own teacher.

Discovering Someone's True Name

A Kotodama master has no conventional means of discovering a being's true name. But he or she can perform the initiation ritual again, with the purpose of discovering the object's or being's secret name.

Uses of Kotodama

Minor Kotodama can create charms and wards. More powerful uses of the art include summoning, binding, and even banishing a being from physical reality.

NEW SKILL

SHODO—CALLIGRAPHY (05%)

Essential to the mastery of written Japanese is the art of calligraphy. This involves the careful use of a bamboo or wood brush tipped with animal hair to write complex Chinese characters, kanji. High proficiency in this skill shows a great degree of hand-eye coordination and muscle control. Each stroke and lift off from the paper is paramount in the art of Shodo.

With this skill, a person gains a bonus to his or her Japanese Language skill equal to 10% of the Shodo skill.

The student has a chance equal to 10% of his or her Shodo skill to correctly guess the meaning of an unknown kanji when first encountered.

A character with Shodo 60% or better can craft charms and wards if he or she chants the proper rites while writing.

OCCUPATION: KOTODAMA MASTER

Though far removed today from their roots in the Heian Era, Kotodama masters still wield a fair amount of power over the intricacies of the ancient written Japanese language. Today, Kotodama masters are often employed crafting talismans and curses, all with the flick of an ink brush. A Kotodama master rarely if ever wears Western clothes, mostly favoring somber gray, brown or white kimonos of a conservative cut.

Skills: Art (Shuki Gei/Ink Brush), Astronomy, Cultural Etiquette, Lore (Shinto), Library Use, Own Language, Shodo/Calligraphy, and any one personal skill.

Equipment: A 40,000 Chinese character reference book collection (8 volumes), ink stone, silk and horsehair ink brushes, white sand, white silk kimono, lots of silk and rice parchment, and freshly blessed wood planks.

Related Mythos Tomes: Today, skilled Kotodama masters use derivatives of the comprehensive tome, *Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama*, now in the possession of the University of Tokyo's Occult Collection.

Related Spells: Banish Thy Name*, Bind by Thy Name (Bind Enemy), Create Charm*, Curse of Thy Name (Implant Fear), Destroy thy Name (Death Spell), Discover True Name (Unmask Demon), Enchant Ink*, Kyonshi*, Naming the Tama (Contact Spirits of the Dead), Ward Thy Abode (Seal Of Isis). Furthermore, with the use of a true name, a Kotodama master can simulate any known Summon or Contact spell.

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Common Kotodama Tools

Ink—practitioners often use a special ink created by the Enchant Ink spell.

Calligraphy brushes—often made of fine horsehair, rarer versions include human hair and the hair of a yokai, such as a kirin.

Paper/scrolls—must be silk of the highest quality, often silk and cotton blends. Sometimes even woven with precious metals.

Planks/plaques—most of the time, these are crafted from sacred hinoki wood or something equally rare.

DARK TAOISM

An importation from China, Taoism is the belief that all existence is suffused with natural polar opposites, characterized as Yin and Yang. Everything has both of these forces within, though one aspect is normally stronger than the other in nature. Everything under the sun can be classified by this polarity: female Yin, male Yang; dark Yin, light Yang, evil Yin, good Yang. Taoists recognize this force, called ki in Japanese, and respect it. Practicing Taoists follow the principle of *Wu Wei* in all facets of their life, achieving action through minimal effort, so as not to disturb the natural ki flow overly much, and also to promote prolonged existence in the Earthly Realm.

TAOIST MAGIC

A special group of dedicated Taoist believers are Taoist alchemists who are interested in harnessing ki forces for their own personal use. The greatest goal all Taoist alchemists aspire to is to cheat death, Emma-O, and attain immortality. Many don't attain this dream, but they often live long beyond the span of normal people. Many Taoist spells are geared to create the components required for immortality.

Other Taoists, attuned to the natural ebb and flow of the universe, read the currents of ki and the Yin/Yang in things to learn a guest at the future. These Taoists use birth years, acupuncture, cracked tortoise shells and the *Yee Ti Ching (I Ching)* to predict the future and pay the bills.

THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY

A Taoist alchemist has a long and dangerous path ahead of him or her if he or she chooses to quest for immortality. There are three main high points to this quest.

Crafting and Imbibing the Red Powder of Immortality

This chore can take decades of an alchemist's life. Because of the hazards of seeking immortality, predecessors rarely write down complete instructions. Often, the alchemist has to craft the Red Powder via guesswork and luck. Failure means a painful death, as many ingredients are naturally toxic. After drinking the concoction, the alchemist has about one month to complete the *nine* steps or the mixture turns poisonous in his bloodstream anyway.

Finding and Ascending the Ivory Stair

This task is usually done while the alchemist creates the Red Powder. The Ivory Stair can be found but not climbed until the alchemist drinks the Red Powder. Doing both, the alchemist can walk the steps and go to the final part of this quest.

Petitioning the Jade Emperor for Immortality

At the top of the Ivory Stair is the Citadel of the Taoist Immortals. In the very center of the terraced citadel, past the Guardian Kings of the Four Directions, is the throne of the Jade Emperor himself. There the alchemist must passionately argue why he or she alone should be allowed to violate the natural cosmic cycle of life and death.

If the Jade Emperor is unmoved or offended, he does nothing—this is the ultimate act of Wu Wei. The Red Powder within the person slowly turns the seeker into a living jade statue, joining halls of others lining the emperor's palace who have failed in the quest. The failed aspirant is alive, immobile, and immortal in a fashion. Sanity checks are in order while the victim runs around the citadel in panic as his skin solidifies.

Success

If the clever alchemist is able to convince the Jade Emperor to immortalize, he or she is granted the gift of immortality. With immortality comes the ability to recover even from wounds that would bring the alchemist to –15 hit points. Beyond –15 HP the immortal dies and reincarnates. The individual can also regenerate the loss of up to 50% of his or her body via misfortune. Lost hit points regenerate at a rate of 1 HP per minute. If brought to –3 HP or less an immortal is inert and "dead" until he or she regenerates to –2 HP. A Taoist immortal never ages.

Immortals must practice a special Taoist breathing exercise two hours every day and bring tribute to the Jade Emperor's court every twelfth anniversary of receiving the gift of eternal life. The gift must be something of personal significance to the giver. The longer the immortal lives and more jaded he or she becomes, the harder the task.

If reduced to below –15 hit points, an immortal will reincarnate in a new body and grow to adulthood, with 70% of the old memories and abilities of his or her past immortal self. These memories and abilities return upon the advent of puberty. Until then, the child may appear to have déjà vu and be cognizant of facts he or she should by all rights not know. These children also have distorted nightmarish dreams of past events throughout their young lives. When the immortal memories surface at puberty, there is sometimes a conflict of personalities between

NEW SKILLS

the young innocent and the ageless immortal entity. Upon adulthood, he or she must perform the Ritual of Immortality again as a supplicant to the Jade Emperor to regain immortal status. Failure to do so may result in the embryonic immortal being put in an insane asylum for multiple personalities or delusional episodes. See also pages 222–223.

OCCUPATION: TAOIST ALCHEMIST

Pursuing the long and risky endeavor of seeking immortality for often questionable reasons, most alchemists do not mix well with everyday society. Often it is the firm adherence to the Confucian strictures on social behavior that prevents an alchemist from becoming completely detached from his humanity and sanity. Second only to his quest for immortality is his perceived role within society and his duty to it. The alchemist is very rank and class conscious: he is naturally deferential to superiors but just as belittling to inferiors. It is for these reasons the alchemist often performs in the esteemed role of a traditional Chinese medicine healer and herbalist in a community, which allows him to go undetected amongst the populace and yet still pursue his obsession unchecked. Alchemists wear the black cap and blue gown of a Chinese Taoist priest.

Skills: Chemistry, Lore (Taoist), Oriental Medicine (any two), Martial Art (Tai Chi), Occult (Taoist Alchemy), Philosophy (Taoist).

Equipment: Collection of Taoist texts, herbalist shop or acupuncture clinic with hidden alchemy workshop, chemicals, potent herbs, rare objects.

Related Mythos Tome: *Tao of Immortality*.

Related Spells: August, Ascend the Stairs of Immortality*, Cheat Karma (Call/Dismiss Quachil Uttaus), Debt of the Taoist Emperor (Unspeakable Promise), Enchant Elixir*, Escape the Grasp of Emma (Create Self Ward), Favor of the Taoist Emperor (Extend), Look to the Future, Protect the Vessel (Flesh Ward), Summon Isu Onna*, Wisdom of Emperors (Chant of Thoth).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Common Taoist Tools

Workshop—alchemists often have a large shop front with traditional medicinal remedies that conceals a workshop containing jars of all manner of bizarre things. From powdered kirin horn to dragon scales, a Taoist alchemist's is the place to go if you seek a curious or fantastical substance. Odds are it's the real thing, but the price isn't cheap.

Taoist Texts—the *Tao Te Ching (I Ching)* is consulted for divination. Also, older and forgotten texts detailing the Taoist view of the universe and its five elements are used in the creation of potions and powders.

Divination implements—most Taoists practice folk divination on the side and often have an assorted number of props to do this. They are often quite old and sometimes even enchanted to increase the Taoist's accuracy.

Fu Sui

Fu sui, better known in the West as *feng shui*, literally means "wind and water." Fu sui is an ancient art from China focused on balance of the elements and correct placement in order to achieve harmony. Taking from the Taoist belief in the presence of Yin and Yang in all of creation, fu sui practitioners hold that the proper placement of things in an environment can ensure the correct balance of forces, ki. Hills and mountains are said to be the backs of dragons, windy and strong in male Yang; while low areas are said to be places of water, and strong in female Yin. By placing man-made objects in the correct areas among the natural flow of ki power, fu sui achieves harmony with nature and adds innate power to human works.

USES OF FU SUI

Practitioners of this art are called in to decide the proper placement of new buildings to ensure a prosperous environment. They are also asked to choose the best plots for graveyards, most often high up the back of the dragon, on hills. When choosing a plot for a shrine or a temple, practitioners are able to locate the "spine of the dragon," where natural ki is the strongest. These are called *ley lines* in the Western Druidic tradition. On a smaller scale, experts consult with people in their homes as to how best to arrange objects within their living environment in order to maximize the flow of ki and create peaceful surroundings.

OCCUPATION: FU SUI SENSEI

Fu Sui sensei are handsomely paid for their consultation work as many companies and local governments seek them out for advice on the most advantageous orientation and layout of new buildings and public works. Also very important are the locations of graveyards, so ancestors may rest in peace. What a Fu Sui expert does is read the dragon lines and recommend the most harmonious placement for things and people to insure a steady flow of ki in the environment.

Skills: Art (Shukô Gei/Ink Brush), Astronomy, Cultural Etiquette, Lore (Taoist), Library Use, Occult (Ryu Michi/Dragon Lines), and any two personal skills.

Equipment: Several Taoist reference books (including the *Tao de Ching*), divining rod, compass, hand mirrors, star charts, receipt book for fat bank account.

Common Fu Sui Tools

Hiiroki branch—practitioners often use a tree branch in the process of divining dragon paths.

Taoist charts—these are consulted about the five Taoist elements, auspicious days, and auspicious places.

Related Spells: Alter Weather, Awaken the Great Tortoise*, Dragon's Wrath*, Create Barrier of Naach-Tith, Hunger Of Kazan*, Spine Of The Dragon*, Warding.

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

JAPANESE MAGIC

Forms of magic practiced by the Japanese over the centuries fall into several basic categories of belief systems which in turn have their own specific cultural functions.

Craft	*Purpose*
Buddhism	Exorcism, warding, binding, the hells, spirit magic, karmic balance
Confucianism	People, social control magic
Feng Shui	Dragon paths (ley lines), personal magic
Kotodama	Sacred power in language: naming, true names
Shinto	Channeling, divination, enchantments, pariahs as Yomi, ancestral magic
Taoism	Alchemy, immortality, Yin/Yang balance

Scroll Two: Secrets

A team of brave but doomed investigators confronts the forces of the Mythos.

SECTION ONE: CATALOGUE NIPPONICA

Histories and rumors of unspeakable tomes are gathered for reference.

Symbols, most exquisite and divine—
Sounds, the power to strangle as twine—
Marks, thrice said, no longer read
Names, both living and dead
Concepts, keys to the gate:
Images, tools of formless hate
Master them: words—
Or mark you they will.
—Initiate's Oath from the secret manual,
Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama.

In this section you will find Mythos tomes unique to Japan. Some may possibly derive from much better known volumes in the West, but other texts are uniquely steeped in the traditions and history found only in Japan and Asia.

Many important texts in Japanese culture are of a religious nature. It's not until the seventeenth century that secular works begin to gain a foothold among the intelligentsia. Further research into the precepts and dogmas of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism by a Mythos scholar will help in understanding the perspectives of the authors of these works. Brief overviews that also might prove helpful concerning these concepts are touched on on pages 88–115.

NAME OF TOME	LANGUAGE/ DATE	AUTHOR	SAN LOSS	C.M.*	WKS.	COMMENTS
Doctrine of Buddha's Tears	Japanese/1987 C.E.	Asahara Shinyama	1D2/1D4+1	+3	4	Buddhist chant book
Tao of Immortality/ Tao te Shénxiān	Mandarin Chinese/ 5th cent. C.E.	Chin Lian	1D6/1D8+1	+8	28	Alchemical manual
Jigoku Zoshi/ Scroll of the Hells	Kobû Japanese/ 11th cent. C.E.	Jiken	1D6/1D10	+9	36	Encrypted painted scrolls
Forbidden Sutra/ Samsara Sutra Siddhartha	Sanskrit/ 3rd c. C.E.	Forbidden Brotherhood	1D8/2D6	+12	48	Buddhist philosophy
Kuro Majyutsu: Kotodama no Gikô/ Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama	Kobû Japanese/ 10th c. C.E.	Anonymous	1D4+2/1D8	+6	24	Sacred orthography
Magaria Michi/ Wandering Path	Japanese/1600 C.E.	Anonymous	1D4/1D8	+7	30	Encrypted fable
Project Yûrei White Paper	Japanese/1998 C.E.	Various	1D4/1D6	+5	8	DVD media/occult
Rock Garden on Infinity	Japanese/1942 C.E.	Shintaro Ikeda	1D3/1D6	+4	4	Mythos haiku
Shinwa Taizen/Book of Myth (Kingdom of Wa)	Mandarin Chinese/ 6th cent. C.E.	Anonymous	1D8/2D6+1	+14	48	True history of Japan
Six Ring Law/ Roku Rin Po	Japanese/1720 C.E.	Musashi Miyamoto	1/1D4	+1	8	Martial arts guide
Supernaturalia Japonica	English/1910 C.E.	Lafcadio Hearn	1D8/1D10	+10	41	Occult encyclopedia

*C.M.—Cthulhu Mythos percentiles.

It's tempting to evaluate these Mythos tomes from a Western perspective. After all, the Mythos truths about our universe span all cultures and languages, right? Maybe so, but bear in mind that the Japanese approach these alien concepts from a perspective influenced by four thousand years of Eastern philosophy, religion, and culture. Things that are accepted as natural fate by a Japanese might be horrific to a Westerner. Moral concepts such as sin and guilt, as Westerners raised in a Greco-Christian culture understand them, were unknown to the Japanese until the twentieth century. For example, to the Japanese eye, the body was not something to be ashamed of, for it was part of nature, an idea drastically changed with the arrival of consumerism from the West. When a man commits a truly depraved act, he is not seen as evil per se but ignorant of the cosmic law of karmic retribution. The Japanese mind operates from a different perceptual framework than that of a foreigner.

Language in the Texts

In the West, Latin was considered the language of scholars and theologians during much of recorded history in Europe. Likewise, the Japanese literati saw Chinese literature and the Chinese writing system, kanji, in much the same light. For this reason, many early tomes actually of Japanese origin were rendered in classical Mandarin Chinese.

From the seventh century onward, Japan developed its own written language derived from Chinese characters, but this native language was intended for daily banter and business, not sacred Buddhist sutras or the important Confucian analects of the elite. *The Tale of Genji*, a masterful novel written by Lady Murasaki, changed this trend and, from the twelfth century onward, many literary works were being written in the language of the layman. This archaic form of written Japanese, called *Kobū Japanese*, is unreadable by untrained modern

Japanese speakers: Kobun is analogous to Old English in England and the United States. However, the Japanese language of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries is readable by modern speakers but occasionally trips them up with archaic terms and idioms.

The period from about 1900 to 1947 saw the use of *Imperial Japanese*, an ultra-polite variant invoking the divinity of the emperor and often recognizing those of higher social rank with the most deferential of language. Imperial Japanese developed from fifty years of colonialism by the military Japanese government. Old Korean, Taiwanese, Burmese, and Chinese citizens who survived the wartime occupation can still speak this variant of Japanese. With the arrival of the Allied occupation forces, the Japanese language was reformed and simplified into what is now known as *Modern Japanese*. In comparison to the 20,000 or so Chinese characters that had to be memorized before, only 2,000 such kanji are required for literacy by today's Japanese citizen. Polite language, Keigo, has also been much simplified, as such language is no longer needed to avoid losing one's head to an offended feudal lord or samurai.

The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears

My life is but a fleeting thing,
My mind is weak and easily controlled,
But my heart is moved, by the tears of the Buddha.
He cries for us, blind are we to the suffering of this world.
I will stop his tears, I will be his soldier,
I will stop the turning of the wheel.
My life is but a fleeting thing,
My mind is weak and easily controlled.

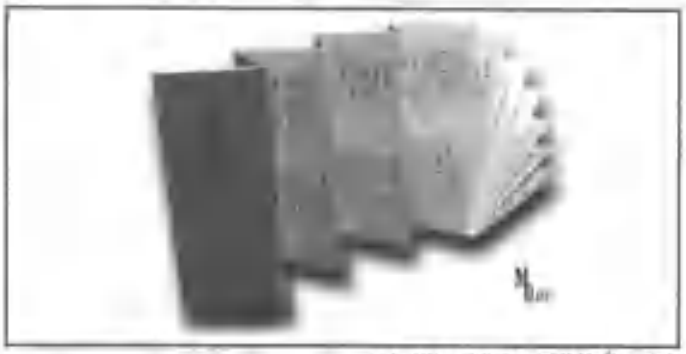
—Mantra in *The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears.*

This booklet contains prayers and chants condensed from the work *Kinki Kyôten* for use by the faithful of the Buddha's Tears cult. Being the work of a charismatic cult, much of this chant book contains only "truths" perceived relevant by the cult and which reinforce cult beliefs. This work is used primarily by members called Hands of the Buddha, who are handlers in charge of the rank and file of the cult. Higher level members of this cult have full access to the more complete *Kinki Kyôten*.

When this booklet is opened, the passages, written from top to bottom vertically, are read left to right. As each page is read the visible accordion-like folds are shifted. If stretched out, the entire unfolded sheet is about one yard in length. The verses are chanted aloud as the cultist performs some type of ascetic ritual such as walking across hot sand or standing sparsely dressed for long periods in the snow.

This work contains an encapsulated retelling of the death of the Buddha and the wisdom he instilled upon his followers as the last breath left his lungs. Included is a brief sketch of the cosmology and true composition of the universe. Much of the booklet is a quoted dialog of the temptation of the Shâkyamuni by Mara, the Lord of Evil, who reveals the true Mythos nature of the universe in his conversation in order to sway the Buddha from the path of final enlightenment.

There is a mantra within this thin work that can also summon the Emerald Lama (see pages 252–254); however, the Lama chooses whom to appear to and will likely only do so for advanced disciples of the cult.



THE DOCTRINE OF BUDDHA'S TEARS

KNOWN VERSIONS

Butsudo no Namida ni Mereta no Kyôgi (The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears)—in Japanese, by Asahara Shinyama, published for private circulation in 1987, 1" thick by 8" in length prayer booklet in Jabara-Ori format (one sheet folded accordion style). *Sanity loss 1D2/1D4+1; Cthulhu Mythos +3 percentiles; average 4 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Blessing the Blade (Enchant Knife), Dance of Karma (Bestow Karma*), Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Mantra of Truth (Contact Deity/Emerald Lama*), Prolong the Suffering (Healing), Meditation on Truth (Journey to the Other Side).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Fumetsu no Dokyô (The Tao of Immortality: Analects of the Void)

The Eternal Void

The Tao is balance. Before you ever seek the Tok'l metal to make the red powder, or even the location of the Ivory Stair, you must ask yourself: why do you seek immortality? Do you really know what you want? Immortality is no boon, rather it is a great burden, for balance is the heart of Tao. Do you have any inkling what it is like to watch all you love wither and die, blown away as dust while you are untouched? To watch kingdoms rise and fall, contemporary men's thoughts becoming alien and strange? Do you wish to see the stars above burn out at the end of eternity and things that dwell in the darkness climb from hiding places to devour a dead world? Take this path and you will. Take this powder, and you will.

—Chin Liao, alleged author of *The Tao of Immortality*

Taoism has always been a favorite pastime of the intellectuals in the East. Japan is no exception. *The Tao of Immortality* arrived in Japan with the Korean delegation bearing the tenets of Buddhism, Chinese writing, and Chinese high culture. Taoism has always lent itself to experimentation and magic.

This form of eastern alchemy has always sought the more ethereal goal of an escape from death rather than the short-term goals of transmutation of worldly substances. While Taoist alchemy has different goals and procedures than Western variants, the flavor is the same. This book, long a Taoist classic, has seen many editions in Asia; it has even inspired a classical Chinese work better known to Western

scholars, the *Tao te Ching*. In the hands of the uninitiated, the *Tao of Immortality* is merely a fanciful read—telling stories about the Taoist emperors and the promise of immortality to those who apply Tao to their life.

However, in the hands of an alchemical master, the book yields the ingredients, formulae, and methodology for attaining immortality. Errors slip into later versions, which have led to the demise of many a novice seeker. For example, the red powder so vital to the final rite of immortality is an amalgam of mercury and other highly toxic metals that leads to slow torturous brain damage and insanity if not properly prepared and neutralized by magical rites before ingestion. The recipe for this powder is often dangerously incomplete in later copies of this work.

The main current, presented in narrative form, includes the method of opening a portal to the realm of the Taoist Heavens, how to ascend the Ivory Stairway of Immortality, the safe path around the guardian warrior kings of the four directions, and the speech that must be proclaimed to the Jade Emperor demanding immortality.

It is believed that the author, Chin Liao, was actually a pseudonym for the Taoist founder, Lao Tze, who wrote this grim tome under the assumed name of a contemporary alchemist, Liao. This alchemist crafted a formula for a drug derived from the Black Lotus found on the Plateau of Leng and Shamballah. Lao Tze imbibed this concoction and while in the grip of the mysterious drug, developed his philosophy on the universal concept of the Tao. Intoxicated by these insights and near fatal addiction, Lao Tze penned the *Tao of Immortality*, his first work. Only later, with effects of the rare drug dulled from his senses and the experiences buried into his subconscious, did Lao Tze fashion the *Tao te Ching* and other works in a form palatable to an audience of peers, unable to grasp the real truth.

This text has circulated among Asian aristocrats and court nobles for centuries, though few have actually harnessed the alchemical sorcery within this book. Even fewer dabblers know the true price the Jade Emperor exacts for the gift of immortality—until there is no turning back.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Original—in classical Mandarin Chinese, written by Chin Liao c. second century C.E. Clay tablets. Believed to be lost.

Tao Te Shénxiān (The Tao of Immortality)—in classical Mandarin Chinese, written by Chin Liao; c. fifth century C.E. A hundred hammered gold sheaves wrapped individually in silk. The oldest known surviving copy, this work sits in the Tokyo National Museum of History as an oddity. The delicate and beautiful creation was discovered among the crates of the treasures of the Chinese emperors hidden in Manchuria during WWII. Carefully restored, indecision as to the most appropriate place to display it has caused the work to sit in museum storage for over two decades. *Sanity Loss: 1D6/1D8+1; Cthulhu Mythos +8 percentiles; average 28 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Ascend the Stairs of Immortality*, Cheat Karma, Short Path to Immortality (Call/Dismiss Quachil Uttaus), Debt of the Taoist Emperor (Unspeakable Promise), Enchant Elixir*, Escape the Grasp of Emma (Create Self Ward), Favor of the Taoist Emperor (Extend), Protect the Vessel (Flesh Ward), Wisdom of Emperors (Chant of Thoth).

Fumetsu no Dōkyō: Gorōku Karatutsuro (The Tao of Immortality: Analects of the Void)—Heian Court Japanese trans.; author unknown; c. tenth century A.D. Parchment scrolls in silver cases. In the possession of Tokyo University's Occult Collection, this edition is not in the best condition. Fully one fourth of the work has been damaged by the elements and entire passages are unreadable due to red powder stains. University scholars have managed translation of about half of the work into modern Japanese; this supplement accompanies the delicate scrolls. *Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; average 32 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Ascend the Stairs of Immortality*, Cheat Karma (Call/Dismiss Quachil Uttaus), Debt of the Taoist Emperor (Unspeakable Promise), Escape the Grasp of Emma (Create Self Ward), Protect the Vessel (Flesh Ward).

Tao Ex-Immortalis—in Latin, trans. by Octavius Nigris; c. seventeenth century A.D. Hardbound print press edition. Supposedly based on the lost second century Mandarin edition, this work was translated by the relatively unknown Orientalist and self-proclaimed sorcerer Octavius Nigris. The author claims in the introduction of the book to have journeyed to a hidden monastery in Western Japan and read the lost Mandarin clay tablets during a time when Japan was barred to foreigners. The work was coolly received in Europe at the time, and regarded as sheer fantasy in occult circles. Octavius gained some notoriety when he was hunted down by the Inquisition and burned as a warlock. Due to the fact that most in the West believed that the work was pure exotic fancy, much like an early-day *Thousand and One Nights*, it escaped the kilns, unlike many other occult books in this period in Europe's history. Miskatonic University has a copy and several more are believed to exist worldwide in the hands of collectors. *Sanity Loss: 1D4+1/1D8; Mythos +7 percentiles; average 22 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Ascend the Stairs of Immortality*, Cheat Karma, Short Path to Immortality (Call/Dismiss Quachil Uttaus), Debt of the Taoist Emperor (Unspeakable Promise), Enchant Elixir*, Escape the Grasp of Emma (Create Self Ward), Favor of the Taoist Emperor (Extend), Protect the Vessel (Flesh Ward), Wisdom of Emperors (Chant of Thoth).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Jigoku Zoshi

(The Scroll of the Hells)

The price all pay for ignorance is being cast into one of the Eight Hot or Eight Cold Hells, the punishment fitting the crime until the karma has been resolved. It is not permanent, but is a very, very, very long time: Tokatsu-Jigoku, *where victims are beaten and smashed to a pulp by oni with iron tetsubo clubs.* Kokujo-Jigoku, *where victims are marked with a cutting line and then cut in half along those lines like cordwood.* Shugo-Jigoku, *where victims are made to constantly climb and descend trees with razor leaves.* Kyokan-Jigoku, *where victims have molten metal poured down the throat.* Daikyokan-Jigoku, *The same torture as Kyokan-Jigoku, but ten times as painful.* Shonetsu-Jigoku, *where victims are boiled in a caldron or fried on an iron skewer impaled from mouth to tailbone.* Daishonetsu-Jigoku, *The same torture as Shonetsu-Jigoku, but ten times as painful. And* Abi-Jigoku, *also known as* Muken-Jigoku, *where victims receive uninterrupted anguish. These are but a few of the promised pleasures that await the ignorant sinner in Jigoku.*

—Joken, *The Scroll of the Hells.*

This work was created by a devoted follower of Honen, one of the founders of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism in Japan. The monk Joken, in his eagerness to please his enlightened master, suggested a great religious undertaking to aid the fledgling sect. Joken proposed the creation of scrolls depicting the hells so that the common people could come to know the horrors of what awaited if they did not shed ignorance and trust in the Amida Buddha. Joken, the simple son a peasant and a good priest, had a talent for painting. He felt the completion of his idea would bring good karmic merit. Master Honen, embroiled at the time in a scandal involving court ladies in the emperor's palace, quickly forgot about Joken's proposal. Joken meanwhile embarked upon a labor of decades.

Joken immediately ran into trouble fulfilling his dream. No expert on the hells, he had no knowledge of these horrible places other than Honen's teachings. Pragmatically, he decided that there were only two ways to accurately depict the Buddhist hells. One was to commit savage deeds, die, and go there, and the other method was to summon an occupant of hell and ask it. Since the first option would make finishing the scroll difficult and contradicted his personal ethics, he decided upon the second course of action. After several disheartening years of unsuccessful searching, Joken finally found a promising lead at another Buddhist sect. He obtained a copy of *The Wandering Path*, within which he found hidden encrypted passages detailing how to summon the creatures of the hells, the oni.

Using the spell, Joken found it summoned the oni lord Daraku, who was more than happy to provide graphic descriptions of the hells to the devout but naive Pure Land priest. Focused only on his goal, and not conscious of the inherent dangers in dealing with such entities, he proceeded to carefully depict what the oni described of each hell. Unknown to Joken, the oni cleverly wove symbols of power and spells into his depictions for his own devious goals.

At the time of crafting the *Jigoku Zoshi*, Joken was directed by Daraku to make four scrolls. Each scroll contains one or more spells not repeated on any of the other three scrolls. The scrolls were named *Minami Zoshi (West Scroll), Higashi Zoshi (East Scroll), Kita Zoshi (North Scroll),* and *Minami Zoshi (South Scroll).*

Upon completion, at Daraku's urging, the scrolls were taken upon the shōgun's official Tokkaido road. The dark purpose of this journey was to spread the four-fold curse of the *Jigoku Zoshi* as far across the four corners of Japan as possible. With the *Minami Zoshi* firmly in hand, Joken, now elderly and near death, then managed with the last of his strength to make the difficult overland journey to Honen, who by this time had been exiled to a remote island for his unyielding beliefs.

Joken proudly showed his master the dark fruit of years of hard labor. At first, Honen was stunned at the sheer skill and detail of the masterpieces. But as his eye studied the detail of the work for long minutes, Honen was chilled to his core as he sensed the horrifying true nature of the scrolls.

Disconcerted, Honen lost his composure and admonished his foolish disciple for straying from the White Path. Heartbroken beyond reckoning, Joken died on the spot, the last of his will sapped. Honen was at a loss. Unable to bring himself to destroy decades of dedicated work by his well-meaning but foolish disciple, Honen stored the *Minami Zoshi* scroll in the sect's temple. Why Honen made no effort to track down the remaining scrolls remains an unanswered mystery. In the ensuing years, rumors circulated about the temple being haunted. After Honen's death, the desolate temple was abandoned by the sect in favor of a new complex on the mainland. Official records maintain that the *Minami Zoshi* made the journey to the sect's headquarters. However, stories from the area surrounding the abandoned temple claim that the "Cursed Scroll of Joken" was taken from the temple by an insane monk draped in tattered green robes.

For most of the pre-modern era, the four scrolls of the *Jigoku Zoshi* circulated among the people as props for Buddhist sermons. Fake copies of these scrolls were also shown. They contained no enchantments or Mythos information, and thus did not produce the

soul-jarring impact of the originals. Repeated lengthy exposure to the content of any of the four scrolls invariably drives the owner insane. Casual viewers find the imagery of the scrolls unsettling and the impressionable may suffer from nightmares afterward, possibly leading to a re-evaluation of personal ethics and world views—the goal of the creator, Joken.

CONTENT

Jigoku Zoshi is a set of four artfully painted scrolls on rice paper, each glued to two pine dowels to allow rolling and unrolling. One scroll is stored in a burned wooden iron-banded box with the *Nembutsu* prayer inscribed upon it. This box is said to also contain the severed arm of an oni king, with the hand clutching one of the scroll's handles (see pages 149–150, "The Iron Banded Box," for more information). Each scroll features a continuously changing vista of the terrain and tortures in the eight hot and eight cold Buddhist Hells, elaborate commentaries, and many spells pertaining to the hells, these latter being furnished by the oni. Each scroll is composed of seemingly delicate parchment, but the material is quite resilient. The colors and images are extremely vivid despite their age, and the scenes, if stared at for any length of time, seem to display the illusion of movement, and perhaps more.

The content of each individual scroll is seemingly identical, but each scroll is crafted with cryptic sigils and glyphs not present on the other scrolls. While each scroll is potent alone, the four scrolls together perfectly interlock on their ends, leaving the space of a single huge diamond angled between the cardinal directions. At the open center point, a temporary Gate opens to pour Joken and oni into the hells; this plays out as the keeper desires. The person who arranges the scrolls to interlock magically receives knowledge of the spells Chasm to Hell and Hellgate. To reach a particular hell, repeat the Sanskrit name of the hell eight times.

The Buddhist symbol for death is the number four, and the four scrolls circulated widely with the emergence of popular Pure Land Buddhism. The original purpose of the *Scroll of the Hells* was to depict graphically for an illiterate populace the different kinds of hells that awaited those who sought not the salvation of the Pure Lands but the easy path of lust and ignorance. At the oni's direction, Joken constantly mixed his own blood with the ink to paint the scrolls. In addition, the composition of pigments given to him by his oni advisor contained exotic metals, infernal excrement, and powdered bones of the damned taken from the hells.

When studied for long periods, the shapes and forms of the pictures reveal layers upon layers of words and additional images concealed in the works. Careful study and comparison of scroll depictions yield wellsprings of powerful Mythos knowledge concerning the structure of the cosmos, but not without cost to one's sanity. The effort of trying to see the barely perceptible within already horrifying portrayals of skewered flesh frays the mind.

At a glance, the images seem harmless. As the viewer studies them, however, the layered and interlocked sigils, ideograms, and glyphs (already cleverly concealed within the images) begin to float off the paper. The act of comprehending these glyphs invokes the scenes, and they come to life as the energy locked within the symbols is released into the viewer's mind.

Careful study of the scrolls also reveals the composition of the Sixth Realm—the Buddhist Hells, the nature of their residents, how to avoid/arrange such a fate, the power structure of the hells, and the secret names of the beings within the hells.

LOOKING INTO THE ABYSS

Long term gazers at the work swear that the scenes come to life before their very eyes, often accompanied by harsh demonic voices that whisper admonitions to commit self-destructive acts. Each ten minute interval spent gazing at the work equals 1 point. Match the accumulated number versus the onlooker's POW on the Resistance Table. Failure indicates a 1D4 sanity point loss.

Example: *Taro sees the fascinating work,* Jigoku Zoshi, *on display in the Tokyo Museum of History and finds he can't take his eyes off of it. He can almost see new images forming on edge of his vision and strains hard to discern them. Before he realizes it, he has been staring at the work for a full hour, or 6 ten-minute units. Match 6 against Taro's POW on the Resistance Table. Taro's player succeeds with the roll, but Taro finds the work unsettling. Perhaps this piece deserves further investigation!*

If the viewer follows the oni's demonic suggestions and commits morally reprehensible acts, the character begins to think of little but the *Jigoku Zoshi*. Failure of the Resistance Roll in the previous paragraph results in an obsession. The character fails to connect deeds of murder, violence, and depravity to the internal voice of the oni he or she hears.

Continued study of the scroll also risks exposure to the full effects of the scroll, a 1D10 Sanity point loss (but minus the 1D4 already lost).

When the keeper feels it appropriate, or when the character develops an appropriate insanity, he or she will cast the Hellgate spell, which exchanges the location of an oni in the hells with the caster on Earth. The caster is put in a random hell for 1D10 hours, and the oni roams free on Earth for the same amount of time. For each hour trapped in the defiled atmosphere of a hell, the caster loses 1D6 sanity points.

He who tries to physically destroy the scrolls finds that any scroll of the *Jigoku Zoshi* can be apparently destroyed, but that it also later mysteriously reappears, when the keeper finds its useful or dismaying to re-introduce it. It may reappear to plague the person who tried to destroy it, or appear for the ownership of some new, unwitting person.

That new character is thereafter dogged by bad luck and diminishing Sanity points.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Jigoku Zushi (The Scroll of the Hells)—in Japanese, by Jokei, c. eleventh century C.E. Referred to in the singular, it consists of four pigment impregnated parchment scrolls, each about 5' wide x 100' long. Of the four scrolls of the *Jigoku Zushi*, the scroll in the iron-banded box *(Higashi Zushi)* is known to rest in the Tokyo University Occult Collection. Another, *Minami Zushi*, is in the hands of the cult Buddha's Tears. At present, the other two are believed held by private collectors, identities unknown. *Sanity loss 1D6/1D10; Cthulhu Mythos +9 percentiles; average 36 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: the scroll *Minami Zushi* alone contains the spell Call Forth the Tongue of Hell (Hunger of Kazan*), as well the standard complement listed further below. The scroll *Higashi Zushi* alone contains the spell Scry the Cold Hells/Hot Hells*, as well the standard complement listed further below. The scroll *Kita Zushi* alone contains the spell Corruption of the Sacred*, as well the standard complement listed further below. The scroll *Minami Zushi* alone contains the spell Contagious Plague (Cause Disease), as well the standard complement listed just below.

Spells common to the four scrolls: Army of Hell*, Call/Dismiss Aku-Shin Kage*, Chasm to Hell*, Contact Deity/Enma*, Create Hungry Ghost*, Hellgate*, Mantra of Truth (Contact Deity/Emerald Lama*), Molten Death (Death Spell), Clear the Ignorance (Sekhmerikenhep's Words), Speak with the Damned (Command Ghost), Summon/Bind Oni*, Summon/Bind Hungry Ghost*. Army of Hell and Chasm to Hell become available to learn only when the four scrolls are magically interlocked.

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Kinki Kyôten
(The Forbidden Sutra)

Universal Truth is not revealed by accident—
The Mind must be pliable to accept,
The Heart must be open to embrace,
The Body must be strong to endure.
It is meant to be known, but is a bitter pill for the unprepared.
—Siddhartha on his death bed to his disciples,
The Forbidden Sutra.

Orated in a poisonous delirium induced by the drug Lian, in the last feverish hours of Shākyamuni's life, these lectures were a dying legacy to his followers—but were never to see inclusion in his mainstream teachings. Upon Shākya's passing, Buddhism's new leaders, the eldest acolytes, immediately denounced his dying lectures as blasphemy and contrary to everything the fledgling religion of Buddhism represented. They declared to the gathered assembly of his faithful that, in his last hours, the Buddha was ill and not speaking with the clear mind of an enlightened being, but through the veil of suffering mortal flesh. It was decreed that the dying lectures should be forgotten so as not to soil the great teacher's memory. And so an already censored version of Buddhism began around 800 B.C.E. as an organized religion.

Despite this edict, a select group of devoted elders secretly memorized the content and trekked off Mount Benares, leaving India and heading deep into the Himalayas. Establishing a monastery called Shamballah far above what would later become the region of Nepal, they faithfully recorded Shākya's dying words on clay tablets in Sanskrit. Soon these acolytes established a formal clergy who came to practice the words contained within the sacred writings. The sheer isolation of the region allowed for no interference by outsiders for over five centuries. Called Green Caps by the locals because of the hats they wore, they referred to themselves as Dugpas. Because of the degenerate form of Buddhism they practiced, utilizing the foulest black rituals and most debased debauchery imaginable, the Dugpas were highly feared by villagers. When mainstream Buddhists, the Yellow Caps, finally migrated into Tibet and Nepal in the fifth and sixth centuries with their teachings of the Lord Buddha, they came upon this dark offshoot of their own religion. The Dugpa sect was so well established by then that repeated attempts by the Yellow Caps to uproot it were largely unsuccessful.

Now calling themselves the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus, the Dugpas detected the threat of a purge, and some of the Brotherhood, the innermost circle, smuggled a third century copy of what was now called *Gyānāh Vikurmanah*, or *The Forbidden Lectures of Shākya*, out of Nepal and into Tang Dynasty China. From here, the tablets were deposited in Shan Province China at a monastery. They were eager there to translate any teachings of the Buddha, now collectively called sutras, into classical Mandarin Chinese for consumption by the literati. It was not until three copies of the text were finished that the monastery abbot noticed that the assigned scribe doing the work was acting peculiar. Reviewing the content of the work, the abbot immediately ordered the scribes to stop transcription. All copies were to be burned. The Emperor's Guard, on monthly patrols of the province, soon discovered the burned-out husk of the monastery and the rotting corpses of the brutally slain abbot and his priests.

Two copies of the translated work, now called *Jinji Fōjing*, found their way to the satellite Chinese kingdom of Paekche in Korea. In the seventh century, along with countless other Buddhist artifacts, one copy was given as a gesture of friendship by the king of Paekche to the emperor of Japan.

With numerous mainstream sutras being deciphered by the aristocrats of Kofun-era Japan, it was assumed that the classical Mandarin version of *Jinji Fōjing, The Forbidden Sutra*, was an intended part of the greater collection of Buddhist teachings. Its discovery during the course of study of the main sutras and its blasphemous content caused an almost instant outcry of rebellion. Matters worsened when Prince Shotoku declared Buddhism the new national religion, to replace native Shinto. The *Jinji Fōjing* came to be used as the most compelling reason not to adopt this corrupt foreign religion. During this strife, fledgling Buddhist temples were burned and gilded Buddhist statues were thrown into rivers. When Prince Shotoku restored order, he discovered that the greatest objection to the introduction of Buddhism came because of *The Forbidden Sutra*. With the fortuitous arrival of a contingent of Chinese Buddhist priests from mainland China, Prince Shotoku was able to firmly verify with religious authority that *The Forbidden Sutra* was not a true holy text. After reviewing the vile work, the prince ordered the false teachings excised and all copies destroyed by imperial edict under penalty of death.

Certain esoteric sects in Japan, however, saw great promise in the many rituals and spells that the work contained and translated the text into vernacular Kobō Japanese. The eighth century Kobō version, *Butsuda Shākya no Kinki no Kyōten*, evidenced several serious errors of transcription owning to the imperfect mastery of Chinese by the translators. In the twelfth century, a secret esoteric Buddhist branch of the Shingon sect reinterpreted the *Jinji Fōjing* from a battered sixth century Mandarin Chinese copy. Not interested in having a complete record of the Lord Buddha's teachings, the sect members excised whole sections of the source text that they found objectionable. Instead they copied critical analysis by later commentators, omitting the text being critiqued. This version they named *Shākya Kinshi Kojintoki ni Kyōten*, or *Kinki Kyōten* for short.

In 1536 C.E., the existence of the *Kinki Kyōten* provoked the Temmon Hokke Rebellion among the dozens of monasteries on the holy Mount Hiei in the old capital of Kyoto. So corrupt and adversarial did the monks become, traveling as they did in roving bands armed with weapons and harassing appointed officials, that the shōgun ordered all forty five of the monasteries on the mountain burned to the ground and all copies of *Kinki Kyōten* and related documents destroyed.

Inevitably, a few secreted copies did escape the torch via covetous court nobles, including one copy that was hidden in the Gold Pavilion, a noble villa, and that today is a national treasure called the Kin-kakuji.

An insane priest unfortunately burned the structure to the ground in the late 1940s along with the four hundred-year-old copy of the *Kinki Kyōten* hidden within. The twenty-four karat gold layered structure was rebuilt but without knowledge of the previous presence of the book. Scorched fragments of the text may still remain somewhere in the original foundation of the Kin-kakuji.

A partial copy of the Mandarin translation, *Jinji Fōjing*, is known to be in the libraries of Miskatonic University as part of Gottfried Mulder's donated estate. Two closely guarded copies of the twelfth century edition, *Kinki Kyōten*, rest in the national headquarters of the Shingon and Tendai sects of Buddhism, both located in Kyoto. At Tokyo University, a partial Sanskrit version of the *Gyānāh Vikarmanah* was discovered recently within an un-cataloged cache of war spoils taken from the Manchuria region late in the 1930s. It was never examined by the university, for war-related political reasons.

CONTENT

This text reveals the true nature of the fabric of reality clothed in the terminology of Buddhism, as revealed by the Shākya upon his attainment of enlightenment. It is said that Buddhism is only concerned with the problem of reincarnation and relief from the suffering that it entails. Strangely, mainstream Buddhism never attempts to answer the question of where we come from or why we are here; it only concentrates on solving the problem of human suffering. *The Forbidden Sutra* answers all those questions and more for the unenlightened and, at the same time, its teachings make moot the whole point of seeking enlightenment in the first place. In attaining satori through seven years of self-meditation, the Shākya was able to view the true nature of the cosmos. This revelation shocked him to the core of his being, and bestowed upon him full enlightenment.

He withheld revealing to his followers man's insignificance compared to the true nature of the cosmos until sixty years later, in his dying hours, as the slow and painful Liao poison from an assassin worked through his system. So that his acolytes could understand, he used "painful means" and framed the knowledge in the context of a discourse with the Lord of Evil, Mara, who had tempted him in the final hours before the young Shākya reached full enlightenment. In this confrontation, Mara (an avatar of the Outer God Yog-Sothoth) revealed the most twisted mind-bending secrets of the universe in an attempt to make the Shākya fail on his path to satori. The Shākya won out against the mind-shattering temptation and cast off Mara, but not before the dark alien knowledge was forever branded in his memory. Those who follow the Buddha's path will find Mara, called "The Dweller on the Threshold" in Western magical circles. He waits for them as they reach the final stages before full enlightenment. The Emerald Lama (an avatar of Hastur) was not incorporated into the main text until much later by revisionists within the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus.

During Shākya's final dying sermon to his faithful, the Buddha revealed, among other things: the true nature of the Six Realms; the existence of ancient pre-human civilizations; mankind's origins among the elder things; a partial description of many Great Old Ones; the Elder Gods and their impotence; the threat of an Earth already colonized by alien races; the Elder Sign; the location of the Plateau of Leng; the history and fate of the continent of Mu and the region of Yhe; the sin of Zanthu; the origins of human religions to keep the masses complacent like sheep; and the role of the Living Buddha to protect mankind.

The Forbidden Sutra also reveals the cosmic cycles of the universe. Every 6,000 years there is a new Living Buddha who replenishes the True Law and the three ages of karmic decay. Every 36,000 years the celestial calendar culminates with a full planetary alignment and geologic upheaval. Every 144,000 years marks the end of an epoch and the domination of an intelligent species. Finally, the fate of man and the end of his reign on Earth is predicted by the end of this celestial epoch in 2012 C.E.

Reading any version of *The Forbidden Sutra* by priests trained in mainstream Buddhist doctrine has a profound effect. This is due in part to so many passages ringing true and the resonance the sutra brings to empty parts of other important mainstream sutras. Rebellion against the establishment and degenerate behavior often follows study of this volume.

Imagine that in the West that a lost church document was discovered, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, so shocking and heretical but ringing

with such undeniable truth that it turned devout followers into violent heretical dissenters—heretics angry at years of deception by the establishment. Imagine the text was so persuasive that it created a whole counter-movement that threatened to destroy established society. Then perhaps you can understand the turmoil *Kinki Kyôten* has caused in the East.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Many modern occult scholars doubt that *The Forbidden Sutra* is an authentic work originating from Shâkya, but a small group of scholarly opponents point out that: stylistically, the fragments recovered from the Sanskrit version are consistent with other works created by the first generation of clergy after the Buddha's death.

Gyânâh Vikarmanah (Samsara Sutra Siddhartha)—in Sanskrit, anonymous, c. 300 B.C.E. Clay tablets. Believed to be lost.

Samsara Sutra Siddhartha—in Sanskrit, Forbidden Brotherhood, c. third century C.E. Stone tablets. Partial copy found hidden in the treasure cache of the Chinese emperors, at Tokyo University. *Sanity loss 1D8/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +12 percentiles; average 48 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: as per *Jinji Fôjing* below, except that Contact Deity/Mara, Cleanse Ignorance, Counsel of the Buddha, Mandala of Harmony, Harmony of Oneness, Prolong the Suffering, Restore the Balance, and Sign of the Six Realms are absent.

Jinji Fôjing—in classical Mandarin, anonymous Tang Dynasty monk, c. sixth century. Fifty fossilized tortoise shells. The cult Buddha's Tears holds a partial copy of this edition of about 18 tortoise shells (SAN loss 1D4+1/1D8; Mythos +7 percentiles). Project Yûrei also possesses 12 tortoise shells of this same copy (SAN loss 1D3+1/1D6; Mythos +5 percentiles). Miskatonic University has, as part of Gottfried Mulder's estate, 11 fossilized tortoise shells of this edition (SAN loss 1D2+1/1D4+1; Mythos +3 percentiles). Each is not aware that theirs is from the same edition and assume they hold partial copies from different works. Keepers are free to choose which spells each segment might contain. *Sanity loss 1D8+1/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +15 percentiles; average 50 weeks to study and comprehend the complete collection of tortoise shells.* Spells: Awaken the Sentinel (Call/Dismiss Cthulhu), Contact Deity/Mara*, Cleanse Ignorance (Curse of Darkness), Counsel of the Buddha (Contact Bosatsu*), Dance of the Celestial Spheres (Call/Dismiss Azathoth), Dance of Karma (Bestow Karma)*, Mandala of Harmony (Elder Sign), Mantra of Truth (Contact Deity/Emerald Lama)*, Meditation of the Emerald Lama (Call/Dismiss Emerald Lama), Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Instant Enlightenment*, Meditation on Truth (Journey to the Other Side), Music of the Spheres (Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods), Prolong the Suffering (Healing), Restore the Balance (Banishment of Yde Etad), Reveal Cosmic Truth (Powder of Ibn-Ghazi), Sign of the Six Realms (Voorish Sign).

Butsuda Shâkya no Kinki no Kyôten—in Kobû Japanese, anonymous, c. eighth century. Sixty fire-scorched illustrated parchment scrolls in silk wrapping. This highly flawed edition was copied from the sixth century Mandarin edition, by authors with less than perfect mastery of Chinese. This edition is considered lost or in a private collection but no record of its destruction has been found. *Sanity loss 1D8/1D10; Cthulhu Mythos +8 percentiles; average 30 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Awaken the Sentinel (Call Cthulhu), Contact Deity/Emerald Lama*, Contact Deity/Mara*, Counsel of the Buddha (Contact Bosatsu*), Dance of the Celestial Spheres (Call/Dismiss Azathoth), Meditation on Truth (Journey to the Other Side), Music of the Spheres (Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods), Prolong the Suffering (Healing), Restore the Balance (Banishment of Yde Etad), Sign of the Six Realms (Voorish Sign).

Shâkya Kinshi Kajimeki ni Kyôten (Kinki Kyôten)—in Japanese, Shingon sect, c. twelfth century. Fifty-two silk scrolls in gilded wooden box. Only two copies of this edition are known to exist. One rests in the very center of the Buddhist Shingon Esoteric sect headquarters in Kyoto, the other in the headquarters of the Esoteric Tendai sect, also in Kyoto. *Sanity loss 1D8/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +11 percentiles; average 36 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: as per *Butsuda Shâkya no Kinki no Kyôten* above, except that Dance of Karma (Bestow Karma), and Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward) are present.

Kinki Kyôten—in Japanese, Forbidden Brotherhood, c. eighteenth century. Eight 10-foot-high illuminated hanging scrolls within a Japanese hinoki cypress crate. The cult Buddha's Tears possesses an illuminated eighteenth century version created by the Forbidden Brotherhood in Nepal, which is an appended and expanded copy of the Shingon twelfth century edition. *Sanity loss 1D10/2D8; Cthulhu Mythos +13 percentiles; average 50 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: as per *Jinji Fôjing* except Awaken the Sentinel (Call/Dismiss Cthulhu), Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Prolong the Suffering (Healing), and Restore the Balance (Banishment of Yde Etad) are absent.

*New spells in this book: see pages 136–143 for more information.

Kuzo Magyutsu: Kotodama no Gikô
(Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama)

Lines upon lines, crossing and curling, shape and form, a sage hand delivers the most potent of magics in this realm: the very language of the gods. Kotodama.

—Foreword to *Black Arts: The Craft of Kotodama*

Kotodama is believed to be a lost art handed down by the vanished races of Mu and Lemuria from their own ancient tongues, ones which knew the mystical secrets of sounds and symbols. The agglutinative languages of Japanese, and by extension Chinese, are fractured remnants of a much older, highly developed and codified system that accurately describe the inner workings of the universe. On the Indian subcontinent, Sanskrit is yet another sister tongue that originates within these same lost cultures. All are diluted dialects of a much more potent and powerful universal song: ageless tonal qualities that accurately express all states of existence within creation. Understanding endows expression. Creative voice allows mastery: manipulation and control over the harmonic energies of which our universe is composed. Mastery bends the song of the universe to our own will. Understanding. Expression. Creation. These are the three fundamental mechanisms of all magical power in all realms: all realities.

APPLICATION

Those who study this secret manual begin by taking any phenomenon, any idea or any entity in the cosmos and encapsulating all of its qualities into a core or root significance within the ebb and flow of reality, to symbolize them in a potent written form. Next, the universe is asked to sing its song, to whisper the mystic note that gives meaning

to the magical written symbol, the secret name. Finally, symbol and sound are merged by the force of a third, the Kotodama master himself or herself, speaking aloud this secret knowledge the cosmos has long held. Speech of this magical naming by another gives it currency, gives it breath—gives it life. The mystical energy of this human crafted song can now be used to shape and form new compositions, either notes that sing in harmony with the chorus of the cosmos, strengthening all or in a cacophony that serves to unmake reality.

Kotodama masters spend years or decades in secluded study distilling their native language in order to return to the source, to relearn the universal song—the song of making and unmaking. Few ever succeed completely; this manual on the black art of Kotodama saves the most erudite student of the arts years of tedious toil and dead ends.

HISTORY

This work contains a guide on mastery of the art of Kotodama. This book is believed by scholars to be the secret teachings of a family trained in Kotodama, a craft that taps the magical power of the written symbols in the Japanese language. The tome includes treatises on the divine origins of the Japanese language, the meaning of its most sacred words, how to harness the power of naming, and the proper rituals for ink calligraphy. Also included in this volume are numerous practical applications toward the practice of the art. This includes proper ink formulation, correct writing medium preparation, talisman creation, calling forth beings by use of secret names, exacting curses, bindings, warding and so forth.

It is believed that the *Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama* may be the basis for many of the variations of the secret manuals on ninja skill. All such books are rumored to be at least partially dictated by the Aku-Shin Kage, the Dark Warlord himself (see pages 250–252 for more information). The most potent edition, called *Manual of the Shadows (Kuragari Shikai)*, was greedily held by an extremely secretive clan of ninja. This clan arose out obscurity and served the Dark Warlord for most of the medieval period in Japan. They acted as messengers to convey the Dark One's displeasure or anger. Though they gave themselves no name, peasants called this ninja clan "Kuragari no Kuragari," or "Shadows of the Shadows." This clan is whispered to have practiced horrible fell magics to destroy enemies of its clan and its ninja were thought not to be human at all. Other ninja clans gave these spies wide berth out of mortal fear. Devastating internecine wars, wiping out whole branches of ninja clans, were initiated to acquire this derivative of the Kotodama manual. All copies of *Kuragari Shikai* are believed to have been destroyed in the early eighteenth century when the Tokugawa Shogûnate finally wiped out the Kuragari no Kuragari Clan in a bloody incident in the old capital of Kyoto.

KNOWN VERSIONS

The only known copy of the *Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama* rests in the vaults of Tokyo University's Occult Collection. However, being that this book is a clan codex of a nearly forgotten craft, lesser variations may very well exist amongst private collectors.

Kuro Majyutsu: Kotodama no Gikô (Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama)—In Kobû Japanese, anonymous court lord c. tenth century C.E. (Heian Era). Sixteen parchment scrolls in gilded cases. *Sanity loss 1D4+2/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +6 percentiles; average 24 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Bind by Thy Name (Bind Enemy), Create Charm*, Curse of Thy Name (Implant Fear), Destroy Thy Name (Death Spell), Enchant Ink*, Erase Thy Name (Bind Soul), Kyonshi*, Naming the Tama (Contact Spirits of the Dead), Discover True Name (Unmask Demon), Ward Thy Abode (Seal of Isis).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Makafushigi Michi
(The Mysterious Path)

"Look at how easily they are corrupted by greed, how quickly they betray comrades out of cowardice, how readily they offer up their bodies for pleasure, how tainted their spirits become in the vain grasping of desires. I at times I wonder why humanity has survived this long. Yes, it will only take a little push to tip this short-sighted lot into the abyss. Then earth's rightful masters will reign."

—The Black Monk, to a daimyô in the Pleasure Quarter of Edo, *The Mysterious Path*.

Thought a fictional account, this printed work was considered just another fantastical tale suitable for only for the most ribald of libraries. Those in Japan's Tendai and Shingon sects of Esoteric Buddhism knew better, for the narrative was a factual account of one of their own fallen priests. Upon closer examination, those in Japan's occult circles can perceive a hidden code encrypted within the text. The original woodblock print run numbered around 250 copies. Of those, most were bought by rich merchants and bored aristocrats like the daimyô. The original copies bear the name *Makafushigi Michi*, roughly *The Mysterious Path*, colloquialized in later copies as *Magaru Michi, The Wandering Path*.

This unusual work intrigued a doctor who worked at the Dutch factory in Nagasaki. This Dutchman, who dabbled in the occult, obtained a copy during the Tokugawa Period when Japan had closed its doors and aggressively persecuted any foreigners making landfall. The Dutch traders, relegated to a small island in the center of Nagasaki Bay, were the only exception.

Magatsu Michi was doubly dangerous to the doctor, for the shogunate frowned on foreigners having access to any Japanese literature. In addition, printed erotic works were officially forbidden in the public forum, despite the fact that the pleasure quarters were quietly condoned. After reading the book surreptitiously thanks to a Japanese merchant friend, the doctor proceeded to secretly translate the text and decipher the codified hidden passages, which he recorded in the form of an appendix to the translated main text. Finished, and hoping to bring some money to his family, he gave the manuscript to his son to smuggle back to Europe from their restricted abode in Nagasaki Harbor. The Nagasaki daimyô learned of the breach of trust by one of his cadre of ninja, but not before the manuscript was well on its way to Europe. For his crime, the doctor was publicly crucified, and his Japanese merchant-friend, Daikokuya, was stripped of all wealth, beheaded for complicity and his entire family shamed into *eta* (the untouchable class) status. For generations, the eta Daikokuya clan held a deep grudge for its shame and worked in the shadows to cause the ultimate downfall of the Tokugawa Shôgunate. Today, they work in the halls of big business unnoticed under a different reading of the last two Kanji used for their clan name, Kuroda, and undermine those in power when possible. Due to its exotic appeal as well as its erotic content, handwritten copies of the smuggled Dutch manuscript quickly found their way into the most decadent circles of eighteenth century Europe.

CONTENTS

The original woodblock edition tells the adventures of a novice Buddhist monk who sets out to determine his lineage only to discover he is not of pure human stock, but is half human and half oni. An oni is the Japanese equivalent of a Western demon, and the novice monk struggles to reconcile his dark heritage with his religion. He tries to continue leading the ascetic life of a Buddhist priest, but partly because of his supernatural heritage, he encounters all manner of bizarre and unusual creatures like yûrei, yôkai, and evil kami. Time and time again he fails in his struggles with his darker nature. He commits a number of heinous and debased acts, many in the Floating World of Japanese prostitution during the Edo Period. Interspersed throughout are also episodes where his half-oni cousins appear to taunt him and give him hints of the Buddhist hells. The tale concludes when the monk travels to China and journeys to the Plateau of Leng. There he confronts his oni father who is imprisoned beneath a mountain by a binding Elder Sign. Realizing that he is fated to his curse and his latent immortality, he goes totally insane and yields to his darker half, becoming his father's eternal servant.

THE CODIFIED TEXT

Because of the code hidden within the text, the effect of reading the narrative provokes an obsessive desire to possess the book. The encrypted passages relate to the main body of the work and detail factual commentary on the text as well as listing Summon, Gate, and Warding spells for creatures in the passages referring to them, but contain no Bind or Banish spells. In addition, a unique spell creates a one-way Gate to any of the hot or cold hells desired. Extracts of passages from *The Forbidden Sutra* also are included in the code, reinforcing tales told in the main text with Mythos truths.

Frequent readers who are morally corrupt (Cthulhu Mythos 15% or higher) must beware, for there is a 30% chance a formless spawn will appear and drag the reader kicking and screaming to the Hell of the Lakes of Molten Iron.

Readers of the original Japanese edition will also discover a third layer of encryption which, when read, casts a spell to summon the Black Monk, Kage-Hoshi Bôzu, to the location of the reader.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Makafushigi Michi—in Kobú Japanese, by the Black Monk, c. ninth century C.E. Believed to be lost.

Magatsu Michi—in vernacular Japanese, anonymous, c. 1600 C.E. Original Ukiyo-e woodblock edition. Speculation abounds as to who the author of this edition is, but it's no secret that some of the best Ukiyo-e artists of the era quietly contributed illustrated woodblocks for this mass print edition. Many of the images graphically depict acts narrated in the work with degenerate and grotesque flair. This work is the consummate representation of the Floating World of Edo Japan, mixing violence, the horrific, and the titillating for an absorbing story. Probably the most potent extant edition of this book, it also contains two layers of encrypted text hidden within the main tales. Decryption requires at least Occult (Japan) 60%. Tokyo University and the Japanese Museum of Art have copies of this work available for private viewing (public displays of pornography are still forbidden in present day Japan). *Sanity loss 1/1D3 to read the original text and 1D4/1D8 to read the encrypted text; Cthulhu Mythos +7 percentiles; average 30 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Call/Dismiss the Bloated Woman, Call/Dismiss Aku-Shun Kage*, Chant of Unlife (Contact Deity/Enma-O*), Enma's Gaze (Evil Eye), Corrupt the Innocent*, Fool Enma (Steal Life), Hellgate*, Mantra of Truth (Contact Deity Emerald Lama*), Oni Skin (Cloak of Fire), Return from Yomi (Resurrection), Summon/Bind Oni*, Summon/Bind Hungry Ghost*, Summon/Bind Yôkai*.

Rondverkken aus Pad—in Dutch, trans. by Dr. Johann Svenson, 1790 C.E. Okkulten Press, illuminated folio edition. This text was carefully translated from the sixteenth century woodblock edition by Dutch Doctor Johann Svenson. Published in Germany, it saw limited circulation among scholars and occultists. The main text is highly sanitized, with questionable ribald passages written in Latin—normal practice in the West until the 1960s. Lacking Latin, it makes for a fantastical read if not an erotic one. An appendix contains the distilled rituals and spells

included in the encrypted Japanese original. Nu notes discuss how the hidden text was extracted. For the serious scholar, evaluating the accuracy of the Dutch and Latin text is impossible without reference to the 1600 A.D. Japanese text. *Sanity loss: none to read the original text and 1D3/1D6 to read the appendix; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; average 12 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Call/Dismiss Aku-Shin Kage*, Chant of Unlife (Contact Deity Emma-O*), Emma's Gaze (Evil Eye), Fool Emma (Steal Life), Hellgate*, Mantra of Truth (Contact Deity/Emerald Lama*), Oni Skin (Cloak of Fire), Summon/Bind Oni*, Summon/Bind Hungry Ghost*, Summon/ Bind Yôkai*.

Le Parvurant Sentier—in French, trans. anonymous, 1925 A.D. Orient Publishing, hardcover folio in leather. At the behest of the Dutch King, a limited French edition illustrated with woodblock prints was copied from a fragmented original Japanese version. This edition is minus the appendix of the Dutch doctor. It was published as a gift to a French official in 1925. Orientalist collectors quickly snatched up the extra hundred and fifty leather-bound copies. One copy of this edition may still be held by the Lafcadio Hearn estate or its successors. Miskatonic University catalogues such a volume but the book has not been found by those wishing to borrow it. The Smithsonian Institution has a copy donated by a prominent Japanese-American businessman in the 1950s. *Sanity loss 1D2/1D5; Cthulhu Mythos +3 percentiles; average 5 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Call/Dismiss Aku-Shin Kage*, Chant of Unlife (Contact Deity Emma-O*), Emma's Gaze (Evil Eye), Corruption of the Sacred*.

*New spells in this book: see pages 136–143 for more information.

Project Yûrei White Paper

Due to the recent mysterious disappearance of the Tokyo Branch project director, standard Yotsubishi corporate procedure calls for briefing the new director on the current agendas and the publishing of a white paper on the overall progress and achievements of Project Yûrei. Not happy about the bureaucratic morass he found upon taking over the project, Acting Director Ichiro Tanaka demanded a comprehensive report detailing every aspect of Project Yûrei so that he could make solid decisions. This 100,000-page report, including archival photos and movies, details the workings at Yotsubishi Heavy Industry's subsidiary, Project Yûrei and the Project's Psi-Mech Division.

Matter-of-factly, this account details fifty years of clandestine research by project researchers into the etheric composition of the human being. Also covered in the report is long-term research into the sphere of the supernatural. Subjects range from detailed dissections and analysis of captured o-bake and non-terrestrial specimens to mathematical formulae derived from rituals recorded in old Mythos tomes. Project Yûrei seeks to develop useful consumer products derived from these mysteries.

Uncovered in the making of this report, and of great surprise to the new acting director, is that Yotsubishi's Psi-Mech Division has siphoned off some of these para-technology breakthroughs for their own dark purposes. The most unethical use of this pilfered technology is Psi-Mech's synthesis of human-machine hybrids using mathematical translations of Mythos spells to bind their unnatural creations together with occultic energies. Only the human brain and spine is preserved, placed in metal armatures with life-like skin and enhanced digital sensors.

Thousands of pages of this work are relatively boring data, facts, and statistics, but information glimmers in this mammoth work. For example, most Project Yûrei staff have been pulled from the rank and file of the mainstream Yotsubishi mother-company and they are considered expendable. These project personnel suffer a high mortality rate, as missions to collect raw materials or data from supernatural entities are often dangerous.

The size and dry content of the 100,000-page multimedia work is part of the reason the reader's sanity is taxed by the perusal of this work. The *White Paper*, written by staffers steeped in bureaucratic jargon, makes for frustrating reading—each section and division of the project is clueless about what the rest are doing. For this reason, construction of useful Mythos spells from redundant and inaccurate or conflicting data is a long and arduous process.

The subjects broached in the text are so shocking that public circulation of the *White Paper* would devastate and ruin even the mother corporation's reputation. Security staff has therefore required that the briefing be published in an experimental high resolution, 35 GB per side, HR-DVD format. The single master copy remains on-site at all times, is protected with heavy encryption, and is usable only at terminals in Project Yûrei headquarters. Printing a hard copy or burning a partial CD-ROM copy of the document requires voice authorization by the current or acting director.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Yûrei Kenkaku Hakusho (Project Yûrei White Paper)—in Japanese, many authors, published in 2002 by Yotsubishi Ltd. in Tokyo. Internal circulation only, HR-DVD electronic media, single master copy. *Sanity Loss: 1D4/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; Occult +15; eight weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Dimensional Portal (Create Gate), Dimensional Vista (Journey to the Other Side), Inertial Balance (Bestow Karma*), Interview Noncorporeal Entity (Command Ghost), Manifest Apparition (Summon/Bind Yôkai*), Plasmic Barrier (Elder Sign), Time Portal (Create Scrying Window).

*New spells in this book: see pages 136–143 for more information.

Rock Garden on Infinity: Memoirs of a Demon

Unseen, shadows bleed
Chaos, howling at our flesh
Now evil's canvas.
—Mythos haiku by Shimani Ikeda,
Rock Garden on Infinity

Seki-te ni Mugen (Rock Garden on Infinity) was written by Imperial Army Officer Shintaro Ikeda. Like all young men of the era, he entered military service but managed an officer's rank by merit of his father's status as a retired minister of the Meiji Government as well as his unfinished medical training at Todai. A nervous man, Ikeda felt relieved when he landed an assignment at Imperial Army Post 108 T, a safe backwater army research facility near the desolate Lake of Ash in Aomori.

It was not until after Ikeda's arrival at his job that he discovered the true nature of the work being done at Post 108 T. It functioned as an adjunct facility to the infamous *Unit 731*, notorious for performing all manner of horrible experiments on Chinese war prisoners, some incarcerated since the Sino-Japanese War of the 1930s. Not a brave man, Ikeda feared a transfer request would land him on the front lines in the Pacific theatre.

Seki-te ni Mugen began as a simple war diary in which Ikeda lamented the appalling nature of Unit 731 and especially the bizarre experiments conducted at Post 108 T. Afraid that his recorded thoughts might be viewed as treasonous, Ikeda disguised the book by sewing the material of a spare shirt into a cover; in this way, it would be difficult to spot in a quick inspection of his personal effects. He took the further step of writing large tracts of his most private thoughts in English as most enlisted men and officers at the post were unable to read the foreign language. English came easily to Ikeda as Koizumi Yakumo, better known as Lafcadio Hearn, was his indirect ancestor.

SHINTARO IKEDA

An avid reader of Hearn's works, Ikeda eagerly perused the unpublished manuscript *Supernaturalia Japonica* lent to him by a cousin several seasons before. In his free time, Ikeda tried his own hand at writing about the strange and unexplained in the secret journal. He sought to understand the occult formulae within the manuscript in a futile attempt to distract himself from the daily slaughterhouse atmosphere of Post 108 T. Due to the ryu michi concentrated around the area, the human suffering at Post 108 T, and Hearn's manuscript, Ikeda's psyche became the conduit for the Great Old One, Nyarlathotep. As Ikeda authored more and more of his secret diary, he suffered severe bouts of paranoia while slowly losing his sanity. At the same time, military personnel at Post 108 T began to fall ill and disappear. Post command insisted it was contamination from an experiment, but Ikeda knew better. Towards the end, Ikeda insisted in his scrawled letters home that a malevolent invisible force was stalking him. Soon after, Ikeda was reported for desertion. The only trace found of the man was the bloody tip of a finger on a mound of leaves and dirt in the forest nearby. Forty-five years later, a farmer digging for tubers on the spot found Ikeda's diary carefully sealed in an airtight canister. The find was confiscated by the National Police, who in turn transferred it to the University of Tokyo Archives.

CONTENT

The book is salted with personal observations, commentary on the *Supernaturalia Japonica*, 108 Mythos haiku poems, several short stories, interesting historical mysteries passed by word of mouth, his own biography, and his paranoid fears of the invisible stalker killing everyone at his complex. Some might describe the work as that of a man losing his sanity. The book alternates between English and Imperial Japanese, an ultra-polite version of the native language in use during WWII. So crazed was Ikeda by his fears, that the text at times alternates between Japanese or English mid-way through sentences.

The haikus of the memoirs pack a great deal of meaning into the 5-7-5-syllable form. The author claims in the work that he wrote haiku only at the fullness of the moon, serenaded by the screams of prisoners as a backdrop to create the right mood of despair conducive to writing. The cryptic imagery used in the haiku requires careful deciphering, but offers deep insights into the nature of the universe and thus the Mythos. There are no spells per se within the haiku but reading them from the original cloth text at the full moon, or when the reader is clinically depressed, has a 40% chance of invoking primal forces. (Keepers may pick a Summon or Call spell at their discretion and cast it as though the reader had done so.)

The stalker mentioned by Ikeda is a Japanese avatar of Nyarlathotep in the guise of the *Dark Warlord*, the *Aku-Shin Kage*. It will stalk anyone who begins to read the entire book (the book invokes Call/Dismiss Aku-Shin Kage). After days or months of haunting the hapless reader, the avatar reveals itself when the last page of the book is reached. Where the author's writing stops, there is blotted ink memorializing where the stalker appeared.

Just the same thing happens to the reader. Invoked by the reader's intension, the avatar appears and offers a pact to the reader. Either the reader can become the avatar's willing servant, as an oni, or the avatar will take the reader's soul to the Buddhist Hells for an eon of torture. Note that the last page of *Seki-te ni Mugen* is blank unless the book is systematically read from beginning to end.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Seki-te ni Mugen: Akuma no Kaigesaken (Rock Garden on Infinity: Memoirs of a Demon)—in Imperial Japanese and English, by Shintaro Ikeda, circa 1942 C.E. One blood stained copy, cloth medium, two reference facsimiles, Tokyo University Occult Archives. *Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +4 percentiles; Occult +8 percentiles; average 4 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: none.

Shinwa Taizen

(The Book of Myth)

The Yamato clan, the line of emperors, is ancient and noble, blessed by Amaterasu, founder and goddess of our nation, for it continues an unbroken line of ancestors back to the sacred land of Mu, genesis of our very race.

—Shinwa Taizen (The Book of Myth).

While the title *Shinwa Taizen* translates as *The Book/Record of Myth*, scholars refer to it as the "Book of Truth." It contains the retelling of classic creation myths of the Japanese islands and the divine nature of the Japanese people. The emperors, the Yamamoto line, are descended from the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Over the centuries the book has validated the divine origins of the imperial throne and thus the emperor's right to rule.

The earliest known edition of the *Shinwa Taizen* is a second century version written by the great sorceress and ruler, Empress Pimiko. Then a sixth century rendition was penned by a female Shinto shaman, an itako, who consulted the long dead spirits of mythic heroes to add in a more contemporary history. With the fall of matriarchal early Japan, the new male leaders sought to rewrite history in order to legitimize their rule, so a highly sanitized seventh century edition was written in Kibû Japanese and was again altered in the thirteenth century to meet the political aspirations of the ruling military class, the shôguns. The *Shinwa Taizen* was further bastardized in the sixteenth century through reinterpretation by the emerging Neo-Confucianist camp whose alterations succeeded in finally making the contents of the book mere fable and moral myth, erasing any shred of its original factual content. The widely known mass print versions—the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*—are in fact based on the sixteenth century woodblock Neo-Confucian edition which, despite its inaccurate contents, was so scandalous at the time that the woodblock printer was executed for printing it.

So in essence, there exist two books today: the *Shinwa Taizen* and the *Kojiki*. One contains the actual origins of the Japanese race that is covered by secret societies. The other is a publicly known book containing fairy tales, creation myths, and a revisionist history for the benefit of temporal leaders' political power base.

CONTENT

The content of this massive tome includes fables, parables, epic poems, firsthand factual accounts of mystical events, songs, commentary on lost passages, and primitive *renga* (linked verse). The *Shinwa Taizen* is composed of seventeen facades, scrolls that detail the history of the Japanese race, its heroes, its villains, and its rulers. The pages begin in the Muvian days, cover the great exodus in 25,000 B.C.E., to the struggles of the last millennia, and even prophetically lay out events into the twenty-fifth century. Even the Chinese editions of the *Shinwa Taizen* contain these prophetic passages, whose cryptic predictions usually become clear only after the events occur.

Clever individuals can decipher and utilize the *Shinwa Taizen* for divination. The *Shinwa Taizen* also clearly details the complete pantheon of kami, their lineage, true power names, spheres of influence, rituals for requesting an audience, summoning and banishing, as well as harnessing elementals and less sentient spirits. Many powerful kami are the result of spells Muvian sorcerers wove upon themselves to ensure the immortality of their spirits so they could guide their descendants. The text also outlines the tenets of Shinto, the process for enchanting items, and the manipulation of matter through the investment of magic points. Certain songs and linked verses, if read aloud, can inadvertently invoke spells or summon mythical beings mentioned within the pages of the *Shinwa Taizen*.

WITHIN THE PAGES

The second century and sixth century editions of the *Shinwa Taizen* trace the lineage of the Japanese people to a time long before the warring Yamamoto Clan on the Kanto Plain, now Tokyo, laid claim to the imperial throne. These editions of the *Shinwa Taizen* record history of the ancient past, spinning a tale of the mass exodus by Japan's ancestors from the Kingdom of the Golden Empire of the Sun on the sunken continent of Mu. Towards the end of the Muvian age, when only scattered islands remained of the once great continent and the barbarian king Thongor was but history, the remnants of the old Muvian kingdoms drew together into a formidable force. At first, the reasons for these peoples working together were practical: to protect the remaining devastated lands from pirates and barbarians. Eventually, serpent people and humans came to co-exist peacefully for hundreds of generations in an integrated society of dual rulership, with the Emperor of the Sun for the humans and the Golden Dragon King for the serpent people. At all levels of the hierarchical society the two races possessed advocates for their respective peoples. The last great civilization of Mu, they also named their kingdom the Golden Empire of the Sun in honor of a great and glorious past. But unlike the older conquering kingdom, they chose to rise from the ashes by first strengthening their own power-base through the rich magical legacy that Mu still possessed.

The empire achieved racial harmony through the use of gradual genetic, ritual, and magical blending of the two peoples. To be sure, such symbolic exchanges were usually minute, but over millennia each race came to take on some features of the other. The serpent people of the Golden Empire of the Sun became distinct from serpent populations in other parts of the world. The same can be said for the lithe pre-Japanese, although today most of their recognizable traits have been blended through war and mating with other Asiatic peoples. These dormant genes still exist within each Japanese person and could be a traceable reason for the Japanese feeling of uniqueness.

According to the *Shinwa Taizen*, this paradise on Earth, the Golden Empire, ended because of the hubris of its leaders. The wizards committed the same sins as the old eastern land of Nianga and fell to the dark influence of chaos. Through the Great Experiment, they attempted to merge the two races, serpent and human, to a final level of ultimate union and ascend to a new state of being. To this end, the wizards invoked the power of Ghatanothoa to provide the energy for their magic. This great spell succeeded, but incurred the wrath of Yig and the Mappo no Ryûjin. (See "The Great Experiment" on page 107 and "Dragon Lords" on pages 188–192.) The backlash by the angry Great Old Ones destroyed half of the kingdom on the same bloody night that Atlantis was devoured in a cataclysm. Panicked, the surviving Muvian high priests cast powerful spells, often sacrificing their eternal souls in the bargain, and teleported tens of thousands of people to a safe refuge on a wild virgin island chain, now collectively called Japan. The price exacted from the serpent people upon reaching the new land was high: magical hibernation and the withdrawal of the favor of Yig, causing quick descent into a degenerate state.

The survivors of Mu displaced the native Ainu who were themselves settlers from the continent of Lemuria. Because the Japanese archipelago contained no large animals (horses were not imported from Korea until the fifth century), the survivors were forced to

rebuild their culture from scratch using only crude indigenous raw materials. Without the aid of the serpent people or the Muvian high priests of old, the culture and technology of the new Japanese lapsed into rice cultivation and primitive shamanism, founding the roots of the native Shinto religion.

Many of the tales of mythic gods and goddesses enshrined within the pages of the sixth century and later editions of the *Shinwa Taizen* are actually factual accounts of the great Muvian sorcerers who aided the survivors in their journey to the new land. The tale found within the public version tells of the creator god Izanagi, who dipped a spear into the oceans—the goddess Izanami—and formed the Japanese islands. In actuality, this tale is the muddled retelling of the casting of massive Gate spells and the invoking of various Great Old Ones by Muvian sorcerers to transport their charges to safety. Based on the name of their old kingdom, the Golden Empire of the Sun, the survivors dubbed their new home "Land of the Rising Sun" to denote the hope that they felt despite their plight.

Today, those of Muvian blood bear the mark of this pairing of serpent and human, and not only in the arena of Japan, as they have scattered to the far sides of the globe. These are the children of "the fallen race," the nephilim. Carefully groomed for genetic purity, and inhabited by astral serpents, they occupy positions of power in every country around the world. Children of the Merkovian Kings, they are the hidden rulers of the world. The *Dragon Lords* (see pages 188–192) represent only a regional variation of a the worldwide cult of the serpent. They are merely the most visible caretakers of this genetic lineage.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Original—in the language of Mu, possibly Naacal, oral tradition, or Sanskrit until second century C.E. Believed to be lost, but there are rumors of a copy found in Okinawa recently.

Kingdom of Wa—by Empress Pimiko, language unknown, second century C.E. Believed to be lost.

Rìběn De Wánggúo (Kingdom of Wa)—classical Mandarin trans., anonymous miko shaman, c. sixth century C.E. Clay tablets. Perhaps the most complete and most potent version, there are also only two known complete copies, with rumors of several more partial ones. The secret society known as the Dragon Lords possesses one well-guarded copy, while the other is believed to have been recently stolen from the Hokkaido Museum of History. This second copy was said to have been found during the excavation of a key-shaped *kofun* grave last year but disappeared from the on-site property room before final shipment to the museum. These massive seventh century kofun mounds are believed to house the bodies of the first emperors of Japan. *Sanity loss 1D8/2D6+1; Cthulhu Mythos +14 percentiles; average 48 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Amaterasu's Gaze*, Ancestral Ward (Elder Sign), Awaken the Great Tortoise*, Blessing of the Dragon's Tongue (Call Yig), Breath of the Kappa*, Contact Serpent People, Contact Deity/ Greater Kami* (Amaterasu, Susano-Wo, Inari, et al.), Counsel of the High Sorcerer (Call Tsathoggua), Create Ancestor Spirit*, Dragon's Wrath*, Eye of Inari (Blight/Bless Crop), Hunger of Kazan*, Lalezar's Bridge (Create Window var.—to Mu's old location), Light of the Sun (Augur), Mirror of the Past* (Create Scrying Window var.—view events in Mu), Purity of the Blood*, Speak with Kazan (Contact Deity/Tulescha), Summon Dragon (Contact Dagon), Spine of the Dragon*.

THE DESTRUCTION AND EVACUATION OF ANCIENT MU

Nihonjiki—in Kobû Japanese, anonymous, c. seventh century C.E. 12"x 36" hammered copper sheaves. This presumed partial copy was lost during World War Two. Some Japanese believe that it was taken back to the West by the occupation forces from the imperial residence in Tokyo in 1945. A few sheaves that were taken to be cleaned at the time still exist in the imperial palace but are of little use to the serious student. This sanitized edition erases references to the serpent people in the histories. *Sanity loss 1D8/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +12 percentiles; average 48 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: As per *Ribën De Wänggüo*, but Blessing of the Dragon's tongue (Call Yig), Contact Serpent People*, Hunger of Kazan*, Lakazar's Bridge (Create Window var.—to Mu's old location), Summon Dragon (Contact Dagon), and Spine of the Dragon* are absent.

Shimwa Taizen (The Book/Record of Myth)—in Japanese, anonymous military scholar, c. thirteenth century C.E. 65 scrolls in gold plated imperial litter (originally used to carry important personages). The one surviving copy of this edition sits within the Ise Shrine dedicated to the head of the pantheon of the Japanese kami, the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Ise Shrine also houses one piece of the Imperial Regalia, a national treasure, the Bronze Mirror of the Sun Goddess. The Bronze Kagami makes Ise one of the most sacred Shinto shrines in Japan. These gold leaf illustrated scrolls are stored in a litter that once used to carry emperors from place to place and also prevented their feet from touching the ground, a terrible taboo in the past. Only serious, highly lettered scholars and those with friends in the right places may view this work. *Sanity loss 1D6/1D10; Cthulhu Mythos +9 percentiles; average 32 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Ancestral Ward (Elder Sign), Awaken the Great Tortoise*, Contact Deity/Greater Kami* (Amaterasu, Susano-Wo, Inari, et al.), Counsel of the High Sorcerer (Call Tsathoggua), Create Ancestor Spirit*, Curse of the Kappa (Wave of Oblivion—Call forth Tsunami), Eye of Inari (Blight/Bless Crop), Hunger of Kazan*, Light of the Sun (August), Mirror of the Past* (Create Scrying Window var.—View Events in Mu), Purity of the Blood*.

Shimwa Taizen to Denta no Nippon (Book of Myth and Legend of Japan)—in Japanese, Neo-Confucianist, Kurei Mushi no Hara, sixteenth century C.E. Folio Woodblock. This *Shimwa Taizen* is a sanitized edition, but based on the best known sixth century Mandarin version. It features various Neo-Confucianist annotations on the morality of certain actions of heroes and villains in the text. If only by virtue of using a less derivative source to copy from, this edition contains more actual truths but they are clothed in the moralist political motivations of the Neo-Confucian movement existing in Japan at the time. Notably missing, and greatly decreasing the value of this edition, are the divinatory passages going into the twenty-first century as well as commentary by previous scribes. Copies of this edition are known to be in the collections of the Dragon Lords, Project Yûrei, and Tokyo University's Occult Collection. The commonly known *Kojiki* translated into modern Japanese is based on this edition and widely available in libraries and bookstores, but it holds no Mythos value. *Sanity loss 1D6/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +11 percentiles; average 38 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Awaken the Great Tortoise*, Blessing of the Dragon's Tongue (Call Yig), Breath of the Kappa*, Contact Serpent People*, Contact Deity/Greater Kami* (Amaterasu, Susano-Wo, Inari, et al.), Counsel of the High Sorcerer (Call Tsathoggua), Dragon's Wrath*, Eye of Inari (Blight/Bless Crop), Hunger of Kazan*, Speak with Kazan (Contact Deity/Tidascha), Summon Dragon (Contact Tatsu*), Spine of the Dragon*

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

The Sixth Ring

Be the water and flow away from your opponent,
Be the wind and let swiftness be your edge
Be the rock and immovable to your foe
Be the flame and burn away all doubt
Be the blade and the spirit will cut away conflict
These are the five rings—
Now let drop all of them to the cold ground.
Release and realize
Now be all things, friend and foe
Understand that everything is lost before it ever begins
And you just begin to grasp this, the sixth ring

—Musashi Miyamoto, *The Sixth Ring*.

Famous duelist and undefeated samurai Musashi Miyamoto is well-known as the author of the 1645 classic *Go Rin no Sho* or *A Book of Five Rings*, a book of martial strategy written for masters of kendô, the way of the sword. Containing a synthesis of Zen Buddhist, Shinto, Confucian and Bushidô philosophy, the seminal work deals with many practical facets of life for a warrior. Born 1584 in Miyamoto village in Mimasaka province, Musashi was the descendant of the powerful Harima Samurai Clan originating just southwest of Edo (modern Tokyo). Musashi's father, a samurai, died when the boy was but seven years of age. His mother long dead, Musashi was placed in the care of his uncle, a priest, who trained him in mastery of kendô. Naturally talented in the ways of war, at age thirteen the boy soundly defeated a skilled samurai in a duel. At sixteen, Musashi left his uncle with a burning desire to seek glory and respect by engaging in duels with opponents who could increase his skill and reach him the true essence of the sword. To the world at large he was considered a *ronin*, a masterless samurai, and like the many others wandering the countryside, little better than a bully and outlaw. For the next thirty-five years, Musashi honed his kendô skills in his bloody quest for prestige and clarity. Almost every duel, using razor sharp swords, ended in the death of one combatant. Over time, Musashi the boy became Musashi the man and with age came an intimate understanding of martial strategy through the surety that death could await only moments into the future. Eventually forsaking all warfare around age fifty, Musashi became a teacher of other warriors for many years. Two years before his death, Musashi left the safety of a local daimyô's castle to retreat to a cave where he composed his famous book *Go Rin no Sho*. Shortly after completing this legendary work, Musashi collapsed and died in 1645. Renowned today as one of the greatest warriors in Japanese history, he is revered by all who practice the art of the sword as *kensei*, the sword saint.

But that is a legend nurtured within popular culture. In reality, Musashi withheld his most secret and potent teachings, those which had granted him an almost preternatural edge against the many opponents he faced in his youthful days as a duelist. Having long forsaken the terrible price of bloodshed in his old age, Musashi felt his pupils and the samurai class were not ready for such dangerous techniques, but he was strangely compelled to record the esoteric knowledge for the ages. This kendô master of the warrior arts did not include a critical sixth "ring," a chapter of insights on the sixth sense, among his famous *Go Rin no Sho* teachings, which he bestowed upon his favored pupil, Teruo Nobuyuki. Musashi dubbed this orphaned chapter *Roku Rin no Sho: Tai-rokkan Naikan*, roughly meaning *Book of the Sixth Ring: Introspection on the Sixth Sense*. Musashi recorded this work as a set of scrolls which he secreted in a cubby hole in the wall of his cave's

crude dojó. There these teachings on tapping the sixth sense in battle sat until his death in 1645. Many months later, Musashi's pupil, Nobuyuki, found the *Roku Rin no Sho* scrolls while putting his teacher's personal affairs in order. Upon reading the scrolls, Nobuyuki immediately understood his teacher's reluctance to share such arcane and almost magical techniques with even his most favored student. Nobuyuki took the teachings into his care and, sensing his sensei's wishes, respectfully kept them from public consumption. Generations later, Nobuyuki's descendant sold the unpublished *Roku Rin no Sho* scrolls re-titled as *Roku Rin Po, The Six Ring Law*, or more simply, *The Sixth Ring*, hoping for a quick profit when his family clan fell on hardship. By this time, Musashi's *Book of Five Rings* was now a popular work well respected by several generations of the warrior caste of samurai. And so, just on the hearsay of Musashi's involvement with the unpublished work *Roku Rin no Sho*, the scrolls quickly found their way to the public in mass print as an illustrated Ukiyo-E woodblock book. The publisher took liberties with the arrangement of content and allowed typographical errors to creep in during the numerous reprintings with the worn wood block master plates.

Critics quickly surfaced amongst the warrior class to declare the work a fake; there was no way that such a strange and esoteric text could be written by the same hand that wrote the brilliant book on strategy, *Go Rin no Sho*. The shogûnate, swayed by its elite, officially proclaimed the work a fraud and passed an edict to ban it. The shôgunal edict stated that *Roku Rin No Sho* invoked techniques of magic and intuition as a path to superior warrior arts, and thus indirectly condemned the austere Bushidô philosophy and the entire bakufu warrior class as unnecessary and wasteful to Japan as a nation. After the shôgun passed the edict, a purge began in which all known copies were rounded up and burned in the center of the capital; the heretic printer who had spread such lies in the first place was beheaded as a message to others. Nobuyuki's descendant quietly fled into the countryside.

The fate of the original 1647 *Roku Rin No Sho* scrolls is unknown, but a woodblock copy of *Roku Rin Po* somehow found its way into the possession of a U.S. naval officer aboard Commodore Perry's returning fleet in 1854, who in turn sold the prints for a hefty profit to a French spiritualist in San Francisco.

CONTENT

This text is a treatise on elevating one's chosen martial art to the highest mental, philosophical, and spiritual level possible—integrating the art so thoroughly into one's being that the skill and the individual become one. Today, such a state might be considered a heightened supernatural level of skill. *Tai-rokkan Naikan* includes physical routines called *kata*, meditation techniques, visualization exercises, and chanting rituals all intended to nurture a preternatural advantage in combat. If all of these proscribed efforts are performed, the process affects spells that enhance martial prowess to a sublime degree.

Note that the reader must already have some rudimentary martial skill for this book to be effective—a minimum of 30% in Martial Arts skill is required for successful enhancement.

Upon completion of study of the work, if a performer completes a martial art routine tapping into the teachings of *The Sixth Ring*, the action takes twice as long to perform but is considered an impale for the purposes of accuracy or damage.

Bushidô, influenced by Zen, also posits that a warrior must balance the skills of war with the arts of harmony. To this end, Musashi also details in the scrolls a lengthy and involved method of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony designed in such a way that, depending upon several key actions, results in the casting of one of four powerful spells whose effects can be held until an actual duel with an opponent. The spell Remolding the One invoked this way is granted by the Aku-Shin Kage, who later visits the caster to exact a heavy cost.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Roku Rin no Sho; Tai-rokkan Naikan (Book of the Sixth Ring: Introspection on the Sixth Sense)—Circa 1645 (Tokugawa Period) by Musashi Miyamoto, Vernacular Japanese, parchment scrolls. Believed to be lost.

Roku Rin Po (The Six Ring Law)—In Japanese, anonymous, published 1720 c. e., Ukiyo-E woodblock print edition. Like the original, *Roku Rin Po* is in vernacular Japanese but in a stylized Japanese calligraphy that is quite difficult to read due to Musashi's crude skill. Numerous hand-carved illustrations accompany the text throughout and make the intent of the writer clear. A copy of this edition is held by Tokyo University among its occult volumes. In the 1920s, one volume found its way to Miskatonic University via an anonymous contributor (no return address but bearing a San Francisco postmark). At least five other copies of this woodblock work are believed to be possessed in various museum collections including the Louvre, the Smithsonian Oriental Collection, and the British Museum of Art. *Sanity Loss: 1/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +1 percentile; Occult +7 percentiles; Martial Arts +35 percentiles; average 8 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Find the Heart (Impeccable Throw), Unnerve Adversary (Implant Fear), Crush the Mind (Mindblast), Remolding the One (Perfection).

Des Sixième Ring (The Sixth Ring)—in French, trans. by Dr. Renald Drake, published 1858, San Francisco, hardcover. Doctor Drake translated the work into English and French and published some hundreds of each version before disappearing under mysterious circumstances at the wharves of San Francisco in March of 1860. Copies of this edition of the book can be found among the collections of rare booksellers if searched for. *Sanity Loss 1/1D3; Cthulhu Mythos +1 percentile; Occult +5 percentiles; Martial Arts +30 percentiles; average 6 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Find the Heart (Impeccable Throw), Unnerve Adversary (Implant Fear), Crush the Mind (Mindblast).

The Sixth Ring (The Secret Teachings of Musashi Miyamoto)—in English, trans. by Dr. Renald Drake, 1859, San Francisco, Paper edition. Why it took another full year to finish this translation is unknown, but the quality of this edition is far below the French version. Perhaps the author was unnerved by the content or preoccupied when writing this work. Several rare bookstores in the San Francisco area are known to carry this volume. *Sanity Loss: 1/1D3; Cthulhu Mythos +1 percentile; Occult +4 percentiles; Martial Arts +25 percentiles; average 7 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Find the Heart (Impeccable Throw), Unnerve Adversary (Implant Fear).

Supernaturalia Japonica

I could hardly believe it myself even as my eyes betrayed my brain. These things really existed! They were forgotten, yes, but as I live and breathe, they really exist. I could hear the cloaked stranger softly laughing, apparently pleased that his demonstration worked as desired. I immediately agreed to take on the project of recording my adopted country's most obscure myths and secrets. I knew I must be as thorough as possible or my Western contemporaries would think it no more than a colourful fiction. The biggest question on my mind was how I was going to explain all this water in the house to my wife. . . .

—Lafcadio Hearn, *Supernaturalia Japonica*.

Lafcadio Hearn adopted Japan as his home at the turn of the twentieth century. He decried the fading of Old Japan and the samurai class right before his eyes. He determined to record as much of the old ways as he could in the form of tales and anecdotes. Ever since an incident in his youth that cost him the sight in one eye, Hearn carried a special love for ghost stories and fables. Once in Japan, he undertook to record the more macabre tales recounted by the former peasant class. Such a task was not easy. Even in the Meiji Era, with the Japanese people modernizing, old superstitions died hard. "To speak of such things is to invoke them" went the old Japanese saying and so Hearn perforce fed his taste for the unusual only with the aid of the more unique individuals in Japanese society.

LAFCADIO HEARN

Eventually, word spread. Hearn soon found a wealth of Japanese supernatural mythology and lore at his fingertips, much of it volunteered by a mysterious hooded priest in black. But some were not pleased with this development, and blocked the publication of Hearn's more accurate supernatural tales. Undeterred, he continued to collect this lore over the years, as copies of *Shinsō Taizen, Kinki Kyōten, Magatsu Michi*, and *Tai-rokkan no Naikai* crossed his desk for consultation. He decided to bring together all of the information about the shadowy world of the Japanese supernatural in an encyclopedic tome.

CONTENTS

Allowing for Hearn's Victorian writing style and the problem of literal translation, many of the entries are in short story or poetic format with voluminous footnotes explaining cultural fine points. *Supernaturalia Japonica* shines light in almost every corner of mysterious Japan. About half of the work is old wives' tales and retold campfire tales, as should be expected, but the rest of this thick manuscript details various Mythos and native Japanese creatures and phenomena. This work is to be appreciated for its breadth of topics if not for its depth, which is still considerable. For researchers, *Supernaturalia Japonica* should be the first work to refer to.

In addition to Hearn's original manuscript, at least two other hand written copies may exist. The location of any of the three is unknown.

KNOWN VERSIONS

Supernaturalia Japonica, An Encyclopedia of Japanese Myth, Monsters, and Ghosts (Shinpi Nyukkajiten)—in English, written by Lafcadio Hearn, c. 1910 C.E. Unpublished hand written mss. in 1119 pages. *Sanity Loss 1D8/1D10; Cthulhu Mythos +10 percentiles; average 41 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Call King of the Yōkai (Call Cthulhu), Call the Dragon (Contact Deity/Yig), Call Emma (Contact Deity/Emma*), Call/Dismiss The Dark Warlord, Aku-Shin Kage*, Command Yūrei (Command Ghost), Secret Name of the Dragon (Contact Serpent Person), Secret Name of the Kappa (Contact Kappa*), Secret Name of the Kitsune (Contact Kitsune*), Secret Name of the Tengu (Contact Tengu*), Summon by Thy Name (Summon/Bind Hungry Ghost*, Oni*, Lesser Kami*, and Yōkai*).

*New spells in this book; see pages 137–143 for more information.

Cthulhu Sushi: English 101 by Jason Chan

Scroll Two, Section Two

A Taoist alchemist petitions the Jade Emperor for the gift of immortality.

SECTION TWO:
A JAPANESE GRIMOIRE

Mysterious new incantations are examined at length to better disarm the intrepid investigator.

. . . Asking why is the surest path to failure.
—Musashi Miyamoto, *The Sixth Ring*

AMATERASU'S GAZE: this horrid spell causes air to thicken and form a temporary lens that intensifies the searing power of the sun.

Costing 2D4 Sanity and variable magic points, this spell takes 1 minute of prayer to Amaterasu to cast. Then, 1D10 minutes later, the lens forms above the target and does its work. Each round the lens causes 1D6 damage as the UV and infrared rays of the sun fry the target's flesh, which bubbles off, ultimately leaving a smoking, blackened carcass. The victim and witnesses lose 1D4 Sanity per round they see this baking taking place. Those in a 5-yard vicinity of the target take 1D3 points of damage. For each 8 magic points spent, the spell's effects last two rounds.

The spell must be targeted on something that the lens then follows around. Shelter from the sun will dampen the spell's effect. This spell can only be cast in the daylight and when the sun is at least partially visible.

ASCEND THE STAIRS OF IMMORTALITY: used by Taoist alchemists when they wish to find the Ivory Stair to the Jade Emperor quickly. By sitting in meditation 1D6 hours, holding a container with the Elixir of Immortality in his or her lap, and spending 5 magic points, the caster gets an innate sense of when and where the Ivory Stair will next appear on Earth. This warning is good for up to three weeks in advance. Transportation to the site and actually seeing the normally invisible Ivory Stair is another matter.

AWAKEN THE GREAT TORTOISE: this spell costs variable magic and POW. The caster summons chthonians who burrow and dance underground for a short time and then usually depart.

A great abode of chthonians lies far below the main islands of Japan (where three major tectonic plates meet). Someday, perhaps, Japan will sink because of the actions of these creatures. Japanese, however, believe that earthquakes are caused by a great tortoise upon which the islands rest. To awaken this tortoise is to cause upheavals.

For each point of earthquake power on the Richter Scale (1–9) the caster must spend 5 magic points and 1D6 Sanity points. If the earthquake is above 5.0 on the scale, there is a chance that Shudde M'ell itself arrives and may surface.

Scale	Effect
1.0–3.9	Minor shaking, accidents, wooden buildings topple.
4.0–5.9	Moderate shaking, cinder structures crumble.
6.0–7.9	Severe shaking, most structures damaged, Kobe.
8.0–9.9+	Everything flattened, many deaths, the "Big One."

BANISH THY NAME: using the victim's true name, this spell allows a caster to banish his target from existence. Costing 12 magic points and 1D4 SAN, the caster must prepare a specially blessed rectangular silk paper on the night of the new moon. Using Kotodama, the caster writes the true name (full birth name) of a specific person or being on the enchanted silk paper using ink prepared by the Enchant Ink spell. Each night, the caster chants the target's name for an hour while the target sleeps.

The caster's POW is rolled against the target's POW on the Resistance Table. If the target fails the roll, he loses 1D6 points of statistics, the loss distributed as evenly as possible. The victim also suffers from horrible nightmares. If the caster fails the roll, he loses 1D4 SAN. This process continues until either the target fades away from existence or the caster gives up or goes insane. If the caster ultimately fails to complete the spell, the victim's statistics slowly return with bed rest.

BESTOW KARMA: the caster allows the previous actions of a being to "catch up with him" and be repaid in kind, be they good or ill. Through this spell, the caster merely encourages the scales to be balanced for any being within the Six Realms. The caster cannot choose the nature of the karma to befall the target, but he can choose the intensity of the karma. Use of this spell requires knowledge of the basic tenets of Buddhism, chanting from a sutra and a sacrifice of magic points or POW and an expenditure of Sanity.

Timeframe

Minor actions and events in the recent past, such as the past month, cost very little to effect a response: 1D4 magic points and no Sanity points.

The farther in the individual's past the caster hopes to have karma return—including past lives—the higher the difficulty and consequent cost to the caster. Retribution with a severity beyond any transgression yet done within the target's current lifetime is assumed to be for an event performed in a previous incarnation.

Casters should also beware that a critical failure on this spell can cause the effects to turn on the caster. The karma begins to affect the target in 1D4 days. The effect of the spell appears to be a natural occurrence or coincidence to the target.

Suggested Cost Based on Distance in Past

- 1–12 months ago—1 magic point per month in the past.
- 1–5 years in the past—1 POW for an event.
- 5–25 years in the past—2 POW for an event.
- 25–125 years in the past—3 POW for an event.
- 125–625 years in the past—4 POW for an event.

Further in the past, continue to multiply the range of years by 5 and increase by 1 POW increments.

Severity

In addition, the more serious the event wished to be repaid, the greater the cost on the mind of the caster:

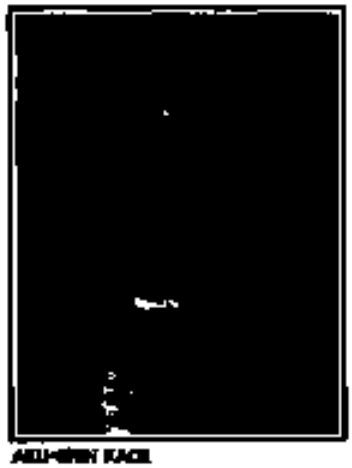
- 1D4 SAN for actions ethically questionable (stealing, lying).
- 1D6 SAN for a serious taboo (killing, torture).
- 1D8 SAN for a reprehensible act (cannibalism, necrophilia).
- 1D10 SAN for a Mythos style retribution (shoggoth fun).

Kimmydoo Kimura, a boseonkai *("good retirement Yakuza thug) and small-time gangster, ran over an old lady crossing the road out of spite. The caster, a Buddhist nun and the daughter of the old woman, cast Instant Karma at a cost of 1 magic point because it was only a few weeks ago the caster also decides to sacrifice 1D6 SAN for full retribution. Two days later, Kimura is walking back to his motorbike from a drug pickup and is hit accidentally by a police car whose brakes mysteriously fail. The caster her only caused Kimura to get hit just due.*

BREATH OF THE KAPPA: all kappa can bestow "kappa's breath," the ability to breathe underwater, but it must be renewed once every 12 hours or the recipient drowns. This spell duplicates the natural kappa ability. It requires 6 magic points and an expenditure of 1 Sanity by the caster. The person receiving the ability must also make a 1D6 Sanity check as he or she magically grows a set of kappa's gills on each side of his or her neck. Long term use of this gift turns the recipient into a kappa; there is also a point where a human receiving this spell is no longer able to breathe air, explaining why so few people return from the captivity of the underwater kappa kingdoms.

If a recipient of this spell fails a Sanity check, the spell's effects become permanent and he or she is no longer able to breathe air as the gills become permanent. Those who succumb to permanent insanity from this spell transform into a kappa in 1D10 weeks under the control of the keeper.

CALL / DISMISS ARU-SHIN KAGE brings forth an avatar of Nyarlathotep, Aru-Shin Kage, to a specially prepared suit of o-yoroi armor. Like all Call/Dismiss spells, the number of magic points cast equals the spell's chance to succeed; see the rule book for more details. A sacrifice of 1D10 sanity points is also needed. The arrival of the deity costs more Sanity points.



ARU-SHIN KAGE

The suit of armor must be painted with the blood from SIZ 40 or more of sentient beings and the last owner of the armor must have died wearing it. The caster then invokes the spell on a moonless night. When the avatar arrives, usually only at the behest of worshipers, a shadow black as pitch will creep

over the entire area, blinding everyone. This shadow will coalesce and inhabit the armor.

CALL / DISMISS EMERALD LAMA: calls forth an avatar of Hastur, the Emerald Lama, to a sand mandala on the ground, an exact duplicate of the *Emerald Mandala*. The spell costs the caster a varying number of magic points and 1D10 Sanity points. The arrival of the deity costs more Sanity points.

The circular sand mandala, measuring eight feet across, must be constructed using specially prepared colored sands and twenty hours of meditation. The required sands are: white talcum sand mixed with 1 quart of dried human blood for red, white talcum sand mixed with crushed emeralds equal to $8,888 in value for green, and white talcum sand mixed with one quart of dried and pulverized human bone for white. The sand duplicate of the Emerald Mandala must be constructed in an area sacred to Buddhists, such as a meditation hall. The construction of the sand sculpture is exacting, requiring DEX and INT checks throughout. If there is any failure in checks, the caster is not aware of them, but the mandala is flawed; the avatar may appear but will not be bound in any way. If the Emerald Lama answers the summons, a distortion in space appears above the mandala, accompanied by distant chanting; the avatar slowly materializes, hovering above the mandala. Note that if the sand sculpture is marred or otherwise disturbed at any point while the avatar is manifest, the Emerald Lama is no longer restrained to the mandala and is free to do its own will.

CALL / DISMISS EMMA-O: calls the King of the Dead to a stone throne consecrated in his honor. The spell costs the caster a varying number of magic points and 1D10 Sanity points. The arrival of the deity costs more Sanity points. This spell works only on cloudy nights.

The throne must be built in an area where many deaths have taken place, preferably under the open sky. A traditional place of public execution or a historical battlefield would be ideal. Fresh human blood must be splashed on the throne prior to calling the deity. If Emma-O answers the summons, a wind as chill as death precedes his arrival. Emma-O arrives on a litter borne by his two oni servants. He seats himself on the stone throne and the oni stand to each side of him. A host of gaki and other horoke (3D10) are also likely to appear on the scene of the summoning, presumably to plead for a better karmic judgment.

CALL / DISMISS MAPPO NO RYŪJIN: calls the Great Dragon of Mappo, the Mappo no Ryūjin, which becomes fully corporeal in order to bring about the end of the world. The spell costs the caster a varying number of magic points and 1D20 Sanity points. The arrival of the deity costs more Sanity points.

The spell for the Ryūjin can only be cast by an individual holding all three of the Japanese Imperial Regalia. Six stone pillars arranged in a keyhole shape must be built. The top of each pillar must have a carved basin to hold one of the seven Chinese elements (the seventh is air). One of six black jade gyoku also is placed in each basin. To finish the spell, the caster must then sacrifice 100 SIZ points of human blood from descendants of the Japanese imperial line. The Great Old One will awaken from its lair in the ruins of Mu and journey to the caster while destroying everything in its path, to herald the conclusion of the Mappo Age, and the new golden age for R'lyeh.

After the fall of Mu, the Muyian temple at Yonaguni (where the Mappo No Ryūjin is imprisoned) was lost to time. As a result, this spell was the only known way to summon the Mappo Dragon. The spell description is essentially an attempt to recreate the conditions found at the original Muyian temple.

CHASM TO HELL: costs 3 POW and 2D6 Sanity as the caster shouts the name of one of the Hells of Jigoku, the name of the ruling oni prince, and the name of the intended victim.

In response, an earthquake rocks the area and a fissure opens in the earth below the target, sucking the named victim to the named hot or cold hell. Those who look into the fissure must make a 1D6 SAN check. Kindly keepers may allow the target to make a Luck roll to miss falling into the fissure but after 1D4 minutes several oni will come through the fissure and try to pull the victim in.

BOSATSU (KANNON)

CONTACT BOSATSU: this spell costs 10 magic points and 1D3 Sanity points to cast. Unless there are no bosatsu nearby, the chanting succeeds automatically. This spell works especially well near a Buddhist temple or site sacred to the Buddhist religion. The individual bosatsu that chooses to appear at the caster's behest is selected by the keeper. The ritual includes burning special incense and chanting the sutra associated with the bosatsu.

CONTACT KAPPA: this spell costs 3 magic points and 1D3 Sanity points to cast. Unless there are no kappa nearby, the chanting succeeds automatically. The best places are all on the seacoast, particularly areas around the Seto Inland Sea and along the West Coast of Japan in the Japan Sea. The ritual requires the caster to throw a small jade figurine of a kappa into the sea.

CONTACT KITSUNE: this Contact spell costs 3 magic points and 1D3 Sanity points to cast. Unless there are no kitsune nearby, the chanting succeeds automatically. Most effective is casting near a shrine dedicated to the rice god Inari. The spell requires an offering of buckwheat noodles, soba, to be left at the base of a shrine gate, a torii.

CONTACT TATSU: this Contact spell costs 9 magic points and 1D3 Sanity points to cast. Unless there are no tatsu nearby, the chanting succeeds automatically. Casting this spell is long and tedious. The ritual requires five cubic feet of elements placed in a large brazier which the desired tatsu has an affinity for (fire for kazu-tsuchi, air for celestial tatsu, or water for wata-tsumi). This brazier must be chanted around and the element within agitated. Additionally, the spell works best around a large volume of the elemental affinity, such as a volcano, mountain air, or a clear lake.

TENGU

CONTACT TENGU: this Contact spell costs 6 magic points and 1D3 Sanity points to cast. Unless there are no tengu nearby, the chanting succeeds automatically. Casting this spell near or in the mountains gets the quickest response by a tengu. The caster must carry a live crow in a bamboo cage to the contact site. Then the caster sits and mentally calls a tengu. The crow must be released to the wild upon arrival of the tengu.

CONTACT DEITY / AKU-SHIN KAGE: opens communication with the Aku-Shin Kage, an avatar of Nyarlathotep. The Contact Deity spell for him can be cast only on the night of a new moon or deep within a cavern where no sun can reach. If the Aku-Shin Kage contacts the caster, usually among a group of worshipers, it will appear as the shadow of an armored samurai on a wall. Someone present, but not the caster, will begin to bleed profusely from all orifices, eyes, ears and even fingernails, causing the victim and witnesses to lose 0/1D6 Sanity. Until it leaves, the avatar speaks through the bleeding victim in harsh unnatural whispers.

The host/victim loses 1 hit point every three rounds until the avatar departs. However, the avatar partially animates the victim and keeps him or her standing erect like a puppet until the contact ends, even if the victim is loses all hit points (though the limbs and head loll about limply). If the victim's hit points are depleted, he or she dies as soon as the avatar departs.

CONTACT DEITY / BOTSU: opens communication with Botsu, the Lord Buddha. The Contact Deity spell for the Botsu is most effective when cast within a Buddhist temple, where the Luck roll is not reduced on the first cast. The caster must meditate in seiza position one hour for each try and then chant a sutra three times, each time for about ten minutes. (A successful Meditation skill roll is necessary for the spell to work.) The Botsu usually waits until the caster is alone, in a contemplative moment. The Buddha speaks with the caster's own voice telepathically.

CONTACT DEITY / EMERALD LAMA: opens communication with the Emerald Lama, an avatar of Hastur. The Contact Deity spell for the avatar is cast by chanting a mantra found in the *Forbidden Sutra* a total of 108 times. If the Emerald Lama decides to contact the caster, a vision of a hovering being in shimmering green robes appears to the caster. The avatar will answer up to three questions pertaining to the nature of enlightenment and the cosmic truth, but will always answer with a koan, a Zen riddle. If the answer involves the Cthulhu Mythos, the avatar can replace the image of itself with a scene of the Mythos event rendered in a pale green light. These scenes can include the slumbering form of Cthulhu, the Court of Azathoth, etc. Witnesses lose Sanity points equal to those lost for a successful Sanity check for the real situation (thus the character would lose 1D10 Sanity points for seeing Cthulhu). If the caster asks questions specifically about the Emerald Lama, the avatar will instantly disappear but leave the Mark of the Lama: an all-consuming obsessive desire to discover more about the avatar to the exclusion of all else.

CONTACT DEITY / EMMA-O: opens communication with Emma-O, Lord of the Dead. The Contact spell for Emma-O must be cast in a graveyard at night, preferably on a freshly buried plot. If Emma decides to contact the caster, a corpse at the caster's feet will claw its way out of the ground, through which Emma-O will speak; this inflicts a 1/1D4+1 Sanity point loss. Emma-O will answer karmic questions for 5 magic points or judge someone's karmic debt for 1 POW. If someone present offends the deity, his or her player must roll CON or less on D100, or the character suffers an immediate and fatal heart attack or stroke.

CONTACT DEITY / GREATER KAMI: opens communication with a greater kami (Amaterasu, Hachiman, Susano-Wo, or Shi-chi-fuku-jin). The spell must be cast near an item enchanted for the arrival of the deity, such as a Shinto shrine or a portable o-mikoshi shrine. When the kami makes contact, it will possess the caster; a wavering image of it appears hovering over the possessed. The kami then speaks its will through the mouth of the caster. Witnesses lose 1/1D6 Sanity.

CONTACT DEITY / MAPPO NO RYŪJIN: opens communication with the Great Dragon of Mappo (Mappo no Ryūjin), a Great Old One and mother of Yig. The Contact Deity spell for the Ryūjin can only be cast holding a jade gyoku during a stormy night. If the Ryūjin contacts the caster, it will appear as a glowing mile-long white apparition weaving between the clouds above. The caster must then bathe the gyoku in 5lZ 10 of fresh human blood if the Ryūjin is to answer a question or perform a modest task. Seeing the semi-corporeal form costs 1D3/1D20 Sanity points.

CORRUPTION OF THE SACRED: the caster must take a personal item from the target and put it in a straw doll.

The caster must perform this spell when spirits are the strongest, from midnight to two in the morning for four consecutive nights. Each night, the caster pins the straw doll on a Shinto Torii gate with an iron nail and sacrifices 1 POW. After expending 4 POW and 1D6 Sanity, the spell takes effect.

On the fourth night, a hungry ghost in the ethereal attaches to the target's aura. The cursed spirit's insatiable desires constantly influence the hapless victim. Each night the victim must roll against the gaki's POW on the Resistance Table. Failure costs the victim 1 POW and 1D4 Sanity as the target gives in to his baser instincts (anger, envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, or sloth). This continues until the spell is broken or the target goes insane.

CREATE ANCESTOR SPIRIT: this powerful spell is used in conjunction with two others, Bind Soul and Enchant Kami Shrine, as the last gruesome step in creating an embryonic uji-gami (clan spirit), *tōson-na-gami* (community protector), or *dōso-jin* (guardian of the village boundary), from a usually unwilling human sacrifice.

After finding a potential subject, a village shaman or Shinto priest first casts Bind Soul to strip the soul from the chosen one's body, leaving it trapped in a temporary container. From there, the caster must have already prepared a more permanent container for the soul using Enchant Kami Shrine. In the final phase, Create Ancestor Spirit, the soul is transformed into an eternal spirit, a lesser kami.

Costing 15 magic points and 4 Sanity points, the caster transforms a human soul into a lesser kami able to protect its new domain. The soul, at this point usually already bound into a temporary container, gets a final POW versus the caster's POW roll on the Resistance Table.

If the soul wins, it is unsuitable for the purpose of becoming a lesser kami, and the caster loses his initial magic and Sanity points dedicated to this spell. The soul may be used for other purposes, however.

If the caster wins, he bends the trapped soul's will to his desired purpose, forever binding and transforming it. The soul, now a lesser kami, no longer retains any memories from life but does keep its basic demeanor and the abilities it had while alive. The lesser kami has a vague sense of protectiveness over its new domain and a hunger for offerings that will feed it magic points. Under the guidance of a village shaman, such a fledgling kami can grow to be a powerful kami, even a greater kami over many generations.

For Buddhists, who believe in reincarnation, this is a horrible fate for a soul—eternal enslavement to the will of the living with no hope of enlightenment.

CREATE CHARM: allows a priest to enchant a small object to protect against evil forces. The priest prepares a piece of material, traditionally a small drawstring satchel (mayoke), plaque of wood (ema), or small paper sheet with a prayer on it (gofu). The priest invests 3 magic points but no Sanity as he writes the desired effect upon the charm. Most often, such a charm grants a 10% bonus to the owner's Luck roll. Other effects include a temporary bonus to Dodge, or a

one-time +1 bonus on a Sanity roll (i.e., a SAN loss of 1D4 becomes 1D4–1). During an encounter, if a magical or supernatural attack occurs upon a person possessing a charm, the keeper may secretly make a Luck roll first, adding in the charm's bonus, to see if the owner was "missed" by the attack. If the Luck roll fails, the charm becomes mundane, permanently losing its magic. The keeper then rolls for the effects of the attack.

Optionally, the caster may use ink created with Enchant Ink to increase the protective power of the charm. In this use, the true name of a type of creature is written on the charm. Using this power of naming (Kotodama), the creature is unable to physically harm the owner during an encounter as long as the owner takes no offensive action. These charms are effective against yôkai, o-bake, hotoke, and oni. The keeper may decide whether or not a charm is effective against Mythos servitor races.

CREATE HUNGRY GHOST: allows the caster to transform an already corrupt living human into a hungry ghost (gaki), bound to an object of the caster's choosing. The spell has no apparent effect until the target's death.

Creating the Talisman of Corruption requires an investment of 2 POW and 1D8 Sanity points. The caster must prepare an item that must be on the target's person when they die. The talisman must represent a major vice of the target (anger, envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, or sloth).

Upon death of the talisman wearer, the caster must attempt an initial POW vs. POW match on the Resistance Table to tame it. After this, the corrupt spirit will do the caster's bidding. Failure means the hungry ghost is free to do its own will.

The new corrupt spirit will follow the commands of the caster as long as Talisman of Corruption is in the caster's possession. If the talisman is destroyed, the gaki is free to flee or exact revenge, but its new form is permanent.

CREATE KYONSHI: the result of the black art of naming, Kotodama, this spell binds the body and soul of a person into a unique type of physical restless hotoke, a kyonshi.

At a cost of 50 magic points, the caster prepares a specially blessed rectangular silk scroll, an o-fuda, on the night of the full moon. This enchantment can be done in consecutive nights of the full moon. Using Kotodama, the caster writes the true name (full birth name) of a specific person on the enchanted scroll using ink prepared by the Enchant Ink spell.

The caster must also handcraft a small squat statue made from mysterious black stone found off the coast of Okinawa. The statue's main feature is three triangular eyes on a vague humanoid form. Here too, the caster must etch the true name of the intended target along the spine of the figurine and invest 15 POW. Note that it need not be the caster's own POW.

KYONSHI STATUETTE

To use the scroll, the caster or another must physically attack the chosen person and stick the paper of naming, the o-fuda, to the target's forehead. The target then rolls his POW vs. the caster's POW on the Resistance Table. Success by the intended target means the scroll doesn't work and is useless.

Failure of the POW roll by the target means he falls to the ground in a deathly coma, losing 1 POW per round as the black stone statue absorbs the target's life force. When the victim is totally drained of POW, the silk paper dissolves in a puff of smoke, leaving a triangular shaped kanji spelling "kyonshi" on the corpse's forehead. The skin of the corpse then turns a pale blue, green, or red. As the soul is departing its shell, the caster must chant words of power, hold the figurine, and expend 1D6 Sanity. The life force and POW of the target enter the black statuette, transforming the target's corpse into a kyonshi.

In the West, a kyonshi might be considered a type of zombie but there are marked differences. Kyonshi are intelligent and partially free willed. They will obey the wishes of their creator or owner of the statue and protect them even to their own destruction, but they also retain their personality and good or bad tendencies from life.

If their creator doesn't specifically prohibit it, a kyonshi will risk the wrath of their owner if they see a chance to act out on their old nature. A good natured kyonshi might try to save a small child from danger, an evil natured one might steal or kill when not watched. This stubborn willfulness and the high mystical cost of creation account for the rarity of these creatures. But when they are created, kyonshi are powerful, almost immortal servitors. As long as the small stone statue holding their soul is undamaged they are indestructible, regenerating all physical wounds within minutes. If the statue is destroyed the kyonshi is still undead and totally free-willed, but now takes damage normally. Physical destruction at this point is permanent. Such free kyonshi are very careful, as there is no afterlife or reincarnation for them; destruction is final.

CREATE YÔKAI: causes artificial magical perturbations in an area that invoke yôkai formation. The caster chants, expending 4D6 magic points and 1 SAN, and after several minutes, a random yôkai will manifest. The keeper, using the rules for yôkai creation on pages 234–235, should tailor the yôkai to fit the environment. Note that the yôkai, having animal level intelligence, will as soon attack the summoner as bargain with him.

DRAGON'S WRATH: causes a wata-tsumi tatsu to manifest in a body of water nearest to the casting. These water dragons are so massive that they instantly displace vast amounts of water, causing a tsunami to strike the shore.

By chanting on the shore, the caster spends a minimum of 15 magic points and 1D8 Sanity to effect the wave. The base size of the manifested wata-tsumi is SIZ 80, able to displace 2,000 cubic feet of water in a wave 10' long, 10' wide, and 15' high. For each additional 5 magic points, add 10 to the wata-tsumi SIZ, and 1 foot to each dimension of the wave. Additional casters who know the spell must expend 1D6 Sanity and thereafter may contribute additional magic points.

At the conclusion of the spell, the tatsu usually returns to its slumber, but by spending 1 POW per +1D6 of the wata-tsumi's damage bonus, the casters can force the tatsu to remain physically manifested for an additional 2D6 hours. Note that actually seeing the tatsu may be call for a further 1D20 Sanity check.

EMMA-O'S KARMIC FATE: by spending 10 magic points, 1D8 Sanity, 3 POW, and naming the target, the caster puts out a summons for the intervention of the Judge of the Dead, Emma-O.

In 1D6 minutes, a wavering image appears of Emma-O seated at his seat of judgement upon which rests the *Book of Karmic Record*. Upon consulting this tome, which takes 1D6 rounds, if the target is found to possess a fair amount of bad karma as evidenced by actions of ignorance such as killing, cheating, and stealing, Emma-O passes judgement.

Unless the target can flee the scene or dismiss Emma-O from the Earthly Realm, Emma-O drains a victim of his life force at a rate of 1 POW and 1 CON per round. The effects of this drain are quite vivid as the victim's body slowly melts and rots away from the outside in. The victim is alive for the entire duration of this attack and a 1D8 Sanity check is required by the victim and witnesses. Upon reaching 0 POW, the victim is dead and forced to reincarnate into the appropriate realm his deeds have earned him.

If the target does not have enough bad karma to warrant punishment, Emma-O turns his wrath on the caster. The caster suffers the effects meant for the intended victim.

ENCHANT ARMY OF HELL: the Aku-Shin Kage gives this spell to his worshipers. The spell makes a group of people a collective terror on the battlefield, though the cost of using it is high. Each member of the assembled group must donate 1 POW to the spell and lose 1D4 Sanity points. The spell costs the caster 1 POW, 20 magic points, and 1D6 Sanity points.

A katana must be bathed in SIZ 4 or more of any sort of blood and chanted over for a day and a night, the caster sacrificing 1 POW and 1D4 Sanity. (This is in addition to the loss incurred by actually casting the spell.) Once the weapon is enchanted, the caster stands before the assemblage and holds the weapon high over his or her head while chanting the words of the spell. The more people in the group, the more deadly the army-to-be becomes as per the table below. Then the skin of the group turns crimson red like that of oni, all are consumed by battle lust, and each member of the Army of Hell sacrifices Sanity points as noted in the table. If a participant goes insane while under this spell, he or she becomes an oni permanently. Each character who faces this monstrous army loses 1/1D4 Sanity points.

Benefits depend on the total POW sacrificed by the "army." Benefits are temporary, and disappear after the intended battle is over. If, after losing benefits, hit points go negative, the spell's recipient is either unconscious or dead. Once enchanted, the katana remains enchanted, but for this purpose only.

POW	*Benefits*	*SAN Loss*
10–20	+1 STR, 2 HP Armor, +5 SIZ	1D6
21–50	+2 STR, +1 DEX, 5 HP Armor, +10 SIZ	1D8
51–up	+5 STR, +2 DEX, 8 HP Armor, +15 SIZ	2D6

ENCHANT ELIXIR: this spell creates the Red Powder of Immortality necessary for Taoist alchemists seeking immortality from the Jade Emperor. It costs 3 POW, 2D6 Sanity points, and 50 magic points. During the enchantment of the powder, the caster mixes powdered kirin horn, a handful of his own blood, iso onna blood, and an amalgam of mercury and other highly toxic metals.

The caster then imbibes the concoction and the player attempts a Luck roll. If the roll fails, the imbiber can look forward to slow, torturous brain damage (a loss of 1 INT per hour) and insanity (a 3D10 Sanity point loss) as the powder was not properly prepared and neutralized by magical rites before ingestion. If the roll succeeds, the caster is now able to see the Ivory Stair to the throne of the Jade Emperor.

The imbiber has three weeks to find the stair, or cast Ascend the Stairs of Immortality, climb them and allow the Jade Emperor to fully metamorphose the elixir so that the caster can achieve immortality. If unable to find the stairs or if the Jade Emperor chooses not to aid the imbiber, the elixir transmutes the person into a living jade statue.

ENCHANT INK: cast to make the mystical ink used by many spells of Kotodama practitioners who wield the power of true names.

First the caster must take wood from a Japanese hinoki cypress tree, considered sacred to Shintoists. The wood must be at least 100 years old; the older the tree, the more powerful the final ink. The wood is burned into a charcoal and mixed with gold dust and the blood of a non-terrestrial creature, like an o-bake or yokai. The caster then chants and invests 1 POW in the mixture. There is enough glittering black ink to write one 9" scroll, six 8-1/2"x11" sheets of paper, or twelve charms.

ENCHANT KAMI SHRINE: this spell, performed by Shinto priests, is used to create a container for a lesser kami to call a refuge or a temporary abode for a greater kami. By spending 10 magic points, 1 POW, and 1 SAN point, the priest enchants a ritual item where the kami can accept offerings from the living. For three days someone must chant at the site of the desired vessel for the kami. If it is just the caster chanting, CON checks may be required in order to stay awake. In the process of enchanting this object, the caster must write the name of the kami repeatedly across the entire surface of the object using ink from the Enchant Ink spell. After three days, the item is ready and the writing on the object disappears. Failure at this point ruins the vessel and results in a loss of all the invested points.

The container must either be a naturally occurring item or man-made item of quality. Natural objects are old trees, a smooth erect rock, or a small clear pool. Natural objects require a Shinto rope or shrine erected around the site to contain the spiritual energy of the kami. If man-made, it must have a great deal of craftsmanship invested in it in accordance with the power level of the kami to inhabit the object. A common example is a portable shrine, o-mikoshi, that often easily costs a community a hundred thousand dollars as the o-mikoshi drips with gold finery and woven silk ornaments.

O-Mikoshi

Offerings placed in front of this receptacle transfer the magic points willfully invested in the offering (such as water, or food) into the POW that replenishes the kami's life force.

HELLGATE: this variant of Create Gate requires a 6' diameter circle of fire or flaming pool of lava. It only opens Gates to Jigoku but in other respects is identical to the original Create Gate spell.

HUNGER OF KAZAN: by spending 20 magic points and 2D4 Sanity, the caster causes fissures to form in the ground and an eruption of molten lava to issue forth. Due to the geologic nature of the Japanese islands, this spell can be cast anywhere to good effect.

This spell wakens a kazu-tsuchi sleeping in the molten rivers below the earth's surface. The base size of the manifested kazu-tsuchi is SIZ 80, able to displace 1,000 cubic feet of lava, which bursts from a fissure in a gout 15 feet high. The lava oozes through the cracks in the ground, destroying everything it touches. Contact with the lava ignites combustibles, melts metal, and causes 1D8 damage per round of contact. For each additional 5 magic points spent, add 10 to the kazu-tsuchi SIZ, 5 feet to the height of the lava fountain, and 100 cubic feet of additional lava.

Additional casters who know the spell may contribute additional magic points but must first expend 1D6 Sanity. Note that actually seeing the tattoo may be call for a further 1D20 Sanity check.

INSTANT ENLIGHTENMENT: ordinarily, enlightenment is a process in which an individual slowly awakens within herself an understanding of the true nature of the universe, including its Mythos-nature. Through meditation a person learns to deal with those truths and integrate them into his or her personality, which serves to dampen any sanity threatening effects. An individual discovers that this life, this reality, is all an illusion and all the baggage of our lives is really insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

Instant Enlightenment, on the other hand, is quite dangerous to a person's sanity as all previous assumptions of this world are turned upside down in a matter of seconds.

The caster rolls his or her own Mythos rating against the target's POW on the Resistance Table. If the caster succeeds, he causes the target to lose 1D6 Sanity. In addition, the victim gains 1D3 Mythos points upon grasping the ghastly truths about reality. How Instant Enlightenment works is that the caster is sharing with the target a taste of the horrors he or she has already experienced in the past. Hence the use of the attacker's Mythos rating; you can only teach what you know. This deluge of cosmic truth is so overwhelming that it is often used by the unscrupulous to cause insanity.

If the target does go temporarily insane—

Since the insanity is magically induced, the target has a chance to roll Intelligence against the attacker's Mythos Rating (the original target number) to realize this and snap out of the insanity/Instant Enlightenment spell. If the INT roll is successful, the insanity ends, but the target still experienced some mind-bending truths and gains 1 Mythos point.

PURITY OF THE BLOOD: a spell used by Shinto priests to determine richness of royal blood within a person. Costing variable magic points, the caster has the target stand in front of a shrine dedicated to the sun goddess Amaterasu, matriarch and progenitor of the imperial family. The caster walks in a circle around the target and chants the entire imperial line of ancestors. The stronger the royal blood within a person, the greater the magic cost to the caster, and the weaker they feel after casting. The shrine to Amaterasu will also shine with a soft golden light of varying intensity if the royal blood is strong in an individual.

Magic Points Drained	Relation
0	Foreigner
1–5	Average Citizen
6–10	Distant Relative
11–18	Imperial Family
19–20	Emperor/Empress

SCRY THE COLD HELLS / HOT HELLS: this variant of Create Scrying Window requires a sizable chunk of polished obsidian glass and only allows scrying of the realms in Jigoku. In other respects it is identical to the original Create Scrying Window spell.

SUMMON / BIND HUNGRY GHOST: a barely visible image of the bloated maggot-like body of a gaki appears. This spell must be cast somewhere one of the seven cardinal desires (anger, envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, or sloth) has taken place in the recent past. Likely spots are houses of ill repute, casinos, and charnel houses. Unless the caster wishes to be a victim himself, the caster must also furnish a subject, usually unwilling, for the hungry ghost to attack and infect with its insatiable hungers.

SUMMON / BIND LESSER KAMI: a kami will manifest in an object of the caster's choosing; however, objects considered sacred to Shinto work best. A sense of awe or menace is felt in the object of veneration when a lesser kami manifests. Kami are invisible personifications of nature.

Lesser kami only manifest at their focus of power the object declared to be inhabited by this protector spirit such as a mountain, ancient tree, or still pool. If the caster wishes for a lesser kami to do more than manifest, he must give the kami 5 magic points per task desired in the form of an offering set at the altar (food, water, rice). If the kami is pleased, it will grant the caster's request. So summoned, a lesser kami can answer questions, do limited divination, perform telekinetic feats, and affect the elements.

SUMMON / BIND ONI: Causes an oni to Gate in from Jigoku. The summoning requires a human sacrifice beaten to a pulp by an iron-shod club, a *tetsu-bo*. The oni appears to walk from the flames of a bonfire the caster has prepared in advance of the ceremony.

SUMMON / BIND YÔKAI: a ghostly light appears and the yôkai solidifies from within it. The summoner needs to cast the spell on a location where a tragic event is known to have occurred. The type and power level of yôkai to appear is based on the number of magic points used previously at the location and the type of tragic event. Keepers should consult the yôkai entry on pages 234–235 for further information on creating a custom yôkai.

SUMMON ISO ONNA: when cast, a vaguely mermaid-like form can be seen leaping out of the water in the distance. Costing 12 magic points, 3 POW and 1D4 SAN, the caster sends out a call for this special kind of yôkai. In 1D10 minutes, the iso onna will appear, swimming from the sea toward the caster. Actually seeing the iso-onna requires an additional 1/1D6 Sanity Check.

ISO ONNA

Old tales say that those who feast upon the flesh of an iso onna gain immortality. To effect this, the caster or others must kill the summoned iso onna; no easy task. In reality, the flesh of an iso-onna is highly toxic. Anyone who is insane enough to eat the flesh must make a percentile roll to determine the outcome. Only 10% actually gain the gift of immortality (01–11 on a D100), 20% painfully transform into an twisted mockery of an iso onna with legs that is often murderously insane from the change (12–32 on a 1D100), and the rest die horribly as their organs liquefy in a matter of minutes after eating the flesh (33–89 on a 1D100). On a 90–00 result, nothing happens, though the person may think he or she is immortal and act accordingly reckless.

The blood of an iso onna is a vital component to creating the famed Red Powder that Taoist Alchemists use.

SPINE OF THE DRAGON: allows someone conversant in Fu Sui to locate a dragon path. Called ley lines in the West, these paths of power act as conduits for yôkai manifestations, dimensional Gates, and passages into the Dreamlands. By expending 1 magic point and walking back and forth carrying a branch of a hinoki tree for ten minutes, the caster can locate dragon paths.

Spells for summoning, binding, or creating yôkai, or for using Gates and paths into the Dreamlands, cost 25% fewer magic points near dragon paths.

SUTRA OF EXORCISM: allows a caster to banish or bind an uni, hotoke, or any Mythos servitor race from Earth. The caster must prepare a specially blessed silk paper costing 5 magic points per sheet in a Buddhist temple. Using the esoteric knowledge of Buddhism or the art of naming, Kotodama, the caster writes the true name of the type of creature, or the individual name of a specific being, on a strip of the blessed paper using ink prepared by the Enchant Ink spell. This creates an o-fuda.

To use the o-fuda charm, the caster or another must physically attack the chosen creature and stick the paper of naming to the target's forehead. This encounter carries all the standard risks a face-to-face confrontation with such a creature would inflict. If the creature is ethereal or non-solid, the paper o-fuda will appear to float in the air. At this point the creature is bound and unable to take any action except squirm and wail in pain. This in itself may call for a 1D4 SAN check to witness.

In the second part of the spell, the caster must chant the entire contents of the *Lotus Sutra* three times while enduring the unearthly screeches of the bound creature. This process takes one hour, requiring an investment of 5 magic points and a SAN check every 15 minutes of listening to this bizarre torture. Failure of any Sanity check means the caster misread the sutra. This releases the bound creature who is usually quite angry and looking to punish the person who hurt it so. Successfully reading the *Lotus Sutra* three times destroys the physical form of the bound creature and returns it to the wheel of reincarnation to be reborn in a more enlightened form. ☯

SAMURAI EXORCISING AN ONI

Scroll Two, Section Three

The *true* Imperial Regalia—ancient artifacts of the Golden Empire of the Sun.

SECTION THREE:

NATIVE TREASURES

Wherein artifacts of Japanese legend are examined.

Trinkets, Talismans, and Wards

Not everything of value glitters.
—Musashi Miyamoto, *The Sixth Ring*

These cultural artifacts are the results of simple Japanese magic and are nowhere as powerful as Mythos inspired items, but they have served people well in everyday life. They are grouped by type, or by places they are most likely to be found. Such charms aren't necessarily enchanted per se, but long held beliefs in the potency of such objects by the people have empowered ordinarily mundane objects. The creatures called yôkai exist for much the same reason: because people believe in them.

SHINTO RITUAL IMPLEMENTS

EMA: a wooden tablet or plaque found at shrines and temples. The front contains a picture or blessing. On the back, the person writes a prayer or wish. Next, he or she hangs it on a rack with dozens or hundreds of similar tablets. If the petitioner is lucky, a kami or bosatsu answers the desire written on the votive tablet.

GOHEI: a Shinto wand. When a Shinto priest chants the names of kami and shakes this wand, it is believed that a person or thing becomes purified of any evils or corruption. The wand is made of sacred hinoki cypress and is tipped with many tassels of specially folded white silk paper.

MAGATAMA: ancient comma-shaped beads. Long an accouterment of Shinto worship, magatama are believed to symbolize the primal essence of the world. The most common material is jade, but obsidian is not unheard of. One of the three Imperial Regalia is in fact an egg-shaped variation of a magatama (see page 155). At the keeper's discretion, an exceptionally high-quality magatama can hold an enchantment of 1D4 magic points each; in the hands of skilled Shinto priest or shaman, lesser kami can be bound within a magatama; ancient magatama, found in kofun tombs and the result of forgotten craftsmanship, may be even more powerful and may still contain 2D10 magic points or an unhappy kami.

MAYOKE: a palm-sized talisman or amulet, believed to dispel evil spirits and the misfortunes that accompany them. They often come in the form of a cloth satchel with a prayer within. If the keeper wishes, such a charm adds 1D4 percentiles to Luck rolls for 24 hours.

SHINTO RITUAL IMPLEMENTS

EMA WITH IMAGE OF KANNON

GOHEI

MAGATAMA

O-MIKOSHI: a portable shrine, where a kami resides when it comes to this reality. O-mikoshi are carried in a litter-like fashion during matsuri festivals by 10–100 men in happi coats and loincloths. The purpose is to encourage the kami to inhabit the shrine based on the spirit the load-bearers put into the effort.

O-mikoshi can be very basic or quite ornate. Most often, they tend to be the latter; a single portable shrine the size of a VW Bug can cost around a half million dollars, laced with soft silk sculptures and gold adornments. (See additional thumbnails on pages 108 and 141.)

SHIMENAWA: a thick twine rope hung with folded paper tassels at intervals is used to demarcate a sacred spot or the gateway to one. At one time, this represented a white snake, which was sacred to the Japanese in the ancient past. (See also the torii thumbnail on page 109.)

BUDDHIST RITUAL IMPLEMENTS

BONSHÔ: a Buddhist copper temple bell, usually 4–6 feet tall. The bell has no internal clapper but is rung when a monk swings a timber of wood suspended on two chains at the bell. During the *Joya no Kane* ritual on the new year, every temple bonshô in the entire country is rung 108 times at sunrise. The deep resonating gongs toll the 108 sins of mankind.

GOFU: a wooden plank wrapped in a slip of paper or a rectangle of paper stuck to any surface on a building in a temple or shrine. Planks have long prayers written on them, while papers have likenesses of the deity or creature. More powerful than mayoke, they are said to keep evil and bad luck at bay. At the keeper's discretion, such a charm can add 1D10 percentiles to Luck rolls for 1D3 days and nights. One can also discourage horoke trying to possess the bearer. (There is no thumbnail for this item.)

HAMAYA AND HAMAYUMI: arrow and bow. Yamabushi often use these specially prepared weapons in performing an exorcism. Many festivals across Japan also use such weapons in an annual exorcism and purification of sacred spots. (See the yumi bow in the weapon diagram on page 85; it is essentially the same except the hamayumi is more decorative.)

JUZÛ/MALA (TIBETAN): Buddhist prayer beads. Resembling a rosary with a tassel on the end, juzû are often made of bodhi wood or bodhi seeds, but jade and other materials are also used. Juzû keep track of the number of times a sutra has been chanted.

KYÔTEN: sutras. Often folded accordion-style, these are the main religious texts of Buddhism. They contain the wisdom of the Buddha, allegories, commentary, and teachings.

MARKERS: markers take many forms and serve various purposes but all are considered bad luck to desecrate. *Gorinto* are wooden planks bearing the Buddhist posthumous name of a deceased. They are usually found lining the walls of Buddhist temples or in family shrines, *butsudan*, in homes. They are broken, burned, or erased upon the thirty-fifth, fiftieth, or hundredth anniversary of a person's death by an ordained Buddhist priest. To do so at any other time is to cause the spirit to become a lost soul and possibly a restless horoke. *Dosojin* are stone obelisks or vaguely humanoid statues that mark the stomping grounds of an ancestral kami sacred to the locals. *Mokkan* are old wooden tablets in the Shinto tradition naming various kami.

SHINTO RITUAL IMPLEMENTS (TOP ROW)/BUDDHIST RITUAL IMPLEMENTS (BOTTOM ROW)

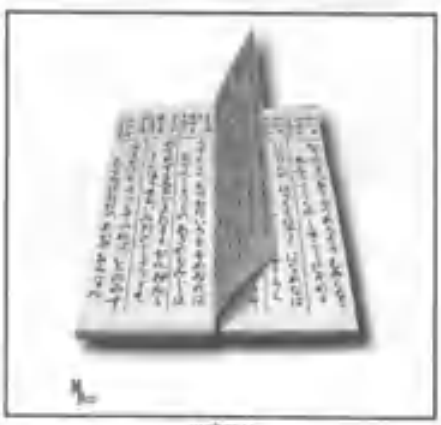
MAYOKE

O-MIKOSHI

SHIMENAWA

BONSHÔ

JUZÛ



KYÔTEN

SENKO: incense. Prepared in many different ways, senko is based upon spices and herbs mixed with flammable salt peter. Incense is used in Buddhist meditation to help focus the mind. Special types are also placed in front of a deceased person's marker to pray for them. At the keeper's option, enhancements upon joss sticks can add +5–10 percentiles to Buddhist spell casting and warding.

Folk magic also uses incense: several specially prepared types of incense are said to make communication with the dead easier. A group lights a cone or stick of incense in a dark room and a thick blue haze forms in the center of the room. A person chants the name of the desired spirit and, hopefully, the correct spirit arrives and forms a body from the wafting incense. Sometimes Mythos creatures may answer the call instead, to the summoning group's peril.

SHAKU-JO: five ringed staff. Used by traveling monks, the rings help a priest focus the mind and symbolize the Five Realms of the cosmos; the Sixth Realm is represented by the staff which ritually strikes Earth, our realm. In a pinch, it also makes an effective staff weapon.

TEPATSU: Buddhist alms bowl. Many priests are expected to forsake all earthly goods, as these represent earthly desire. A simple bowl is often the only physical possession of a monk besides the robe on his back; all other implements are considered community property. Many a supernatural story centers on a priest and his begging bowl.

DEGENERATE TANTRIC RITUAL IMPLEMENTS

Rarely seen outside of the secretive circles within the enigmatic esoteric Buddhist sects of Tendai and Shingon, these blood-soaked tools originally hail from millennia-old tantric Indian and Tibetan practices both erotic and terrifying to behold. Most all involve the crafting of ritual instruments from human remains. On one level, this emphasizes the impermanence of the mortal shell in the endless cycle of rebirth. On a more magical level, the use of human bones imparts a great deal of energy when performing special Buddhist magical rituals and degenerate practices. These objects are not usually enchanted but those that are magical are highly dangerous. At the keeper's discretion, such an implement is either haunted by the gaki or yūrei of a wrathful restless spirit or is an enchanted object. (Optional rule: use of tantric tools when performing a Buddhist ritual or spell adds a +5 percentile bonus to the spellcaster's chances of success.)

DORJE (TIBETAN)/VARJA (HINDU): diamond thunderbolt. This ritual object symbolizes absolute stability and is always found paired with a ritual varja singing bell representing opposite ends of the male-female spectrum of energies. The dorje is the double ended "thunderbolt of enlightenment" causing sudden and irrevocable change in human consciousness leading to awareness of the true nature of reality, often only experienced by saints and mystics. This "dropping away of self" is called "the Great Death" by Tibetan lamas. Functioning as a "wand" to focus enlightenment, the varja is often placed under the seating cushion to strengthen meditation. Dorje are also placed on temple doors and archways as a guardian force.

KANGLING (TIBETAN): femur trumpet. Made of human thigh bone, this trumpet is used by exorcists to drive away wrathful spirits and by followers of the darker path to summon them. The kangling is able to summon hungry spirits, gaki, and demons. Exorcists do so out of compassion to satisfy the entity's hunger and release the being while dark practitioners harness that anguish. The kangling is played

BUDDHIST RITUAL IMPLEMENTS (TOP ROW THROUGH BOTTOM ROW LEFT)/TANTRIC RITUAL IMPLEMENTS (BOTTOM ROW CENTER TO RIGHT)

MARKERS

SENKO

SHAKU-JO

TEPATSU

BELL AND DORJE/VARJA

KANGLING

with the left hand while pounding a *damaru* (an hourglass-shaped drum made of two human skull halves) in the right hand. When combined with a phurba, the trumpet can be used to summon or halt inclement weather. Tantric use of the kangling also includes the "Rinsal of Chod" for excising the ego.

KAPALA (SANSKRIT): skull alms bowl. This "jewel bowl" originally developed from Hindu skull cults worshiping Shiva, goddess of destruction, and migrated to Buddhism in India and Tibet in later centuries. Japanese Buddhists imported the tool from the highest and most secretive practitioners, the Tantric Tibetan lamas. Highly ornate kapala are inlaid with gold or silver linings with the dome carved with important Buddhist ritual symbols. Tantra rites use the kapala as a serving vessel for blood or fluids. Other sects use a consecrated kapala to aid in clairvoyant and prophetic endeavors. Sealed by ritual, this karmic vessel is the living essence of both the good and evil karma of the dead owner. This karma is easily transferred to any handling the skull bowl, often with ill results for the uninitiated. A kapala should never be left empty or "bowl-side up" as it allows the life force and karma of the deceased person to escape and renders the bowl inert.

PHURBA (TIBETAN): "diamond spike." A phurba is the ultimate weapon of intention and is never used lightly. These ritual daggers are used in esoteric Buddhist rituals to symbolically sever attachment to desire, ward off evil entities, and as a tool for ritual sacrifice. A triangular blade, representing the three bodies of the Buddha unified into a single razor sharp point, it is able to subjugate any evil force, and many phurba are further decorated with three effigies of an indwelling spirit or a dorje upon the hilt of the weapon. A razor-sharp implement widely varying in composition from metal to precious stone, a tantric phurba is often made of human bone though the most powerful are made of meteoric rock for use against extraterrestrial entities. Phurbas, in the hands of an experienced wielder, are immensely powerful tools in exorcism rituals where they are "staked" in the earth to create a stable circle of hallowed ground. A larger boundary is created by attaching threads of a certain color to several staked phurbas. In sensually obsessed tantric rites, the diamond spike is perverted for evil practices, often infusing the blade with fell magics.

CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

DOGU HANIWA: small clay statuette. Made in the late Yayoi and early Kofun periods of Japanese history, haniwa are small figurines which were often buried with a great personage to symbolize possessions to take with him or her to the afterworld. Most puzzling, however, is a type called dogu. These figurines are shaped like little stubby humanoids with bulbous bug-like eyes and slits for mouths. Some speculate that in ancient times dogu may have depicted alien visitors to Earth or some Mythos race who then inhabited the Japanese islands.

HANKO: kanji character stamp seal. Hanko are an important part of daily business even in modern Japan. This is considered a legal signature in Japan. So, understandably, people keep their personal hanko under lock and key. A hanko can be a basic 1,000-yen plastic shaft with the stamp on the base, or a 100,000-yen carved ivory or jade figurine for a shaft. A long time ago, it was believed that the hanko was the repository for a person's true name. Possession of another's hanko added potency to any sympathetic magic used against that person. At their option, keepers can allow hanko thieves to add 20% bonuses to spells targeting hanko-less people.

TANTRIC RITUAL IMPLEMENTS (TOP ROW LEFT AND CENTER)/CULTURAL ARTIFACTS (TOP ROW RIGHT THROUGH BOTTOM ROW)

KAPALA

PHURBA

DOGU-HANIWA

HANKO WITH INK PAD

HISAGO

REZUMO

HISAGO: sake gourd. Seen in many drinking establishments, this dumbbell shaped gourd was often carried by habitual drinkers in the Edo Period. Several interesting tales tell of Yamabushi priests or tengu bearing these gourds with special elixirs within. These gourds can preserve contents for extremely long periods of time if kept cool and dry. Taoist alchemists sometimes use hisago for storage of valuable ingredients.

IREZUMO: tattoos. Wearing tattoos is a cultural taboo in Japan. Only the Yakuza wear such body markings, so anyone with such body markings carries the stigma of a troublemaker and bandit. As Yakuza go up in rank, they add more and more tattoos to their skin, often featuring motifs such as battling tigers and dragons, and sometimes kami and oni. By the time a Yakuza is a big boss, his entire body is covered in such tattoos. But Yakuza are careful what images they put on their body, as the common belief is that the character of the depicted being can encroach upon the person's own personality. This is why they choose tigers and dragons; they are noble and strong creatures. Some folk tales also tell of irezumo taking on lives of their own while the owner sleeps.

KATANA: in days of old, a sword which saw many battles in the hands of its samurai owner was believed to still contain the souls of those it slew. This is believed doubly so of katana owned by particularly able or infamous swordsmen. It's a good thing that most surviving ancient katana are behind glass in museums. At the keeper's option, katana at least fifty years old can be inhabited by various types of hotoke. An owner with low POW risks possession by the spirits inside the sword. Breaking such a sword releases the spirits but they are free to form bodies as hotoke and attack their liberators. There is also the bill for breaking a priceless heirloom. Foreign investigators might find WWII-era katanas particularly creepy, as many of those slain were Western prisoners of war. (See the weapon diagram on page 85.)

NINGYO: dolls. Small facsimiles of people are believed to carry lives of their own by many Japanese. Dolls in general also unnerve certain people. Some of the most commonly found dolls in Japanese life are Daruma dolls, Bunraku puppets, and dolls given on Boy's Day and *Hina-matsuri*, Child's Day (also known as Doll's Day).

NINGYO

A Daruma doll is a small egg-shaped roly-poly likeness of the Indian priest, Daruma, who is said to have sat under a bodhi tree in meditation so long that his legs fell off. Today, people take an eyeless Daruma doll, make a wish and paint in the left eye. When the wish comes true, in gratitude they paint in the other eye.

Bunraku dolls are 1/3-life-sized puppets operated by three skilled performers. They are garbed in pre-modern style dress, kimono and the like. Quite intricate and beautiful, they are sometimes believed to take on lives of their own, independent of their operators. On Boy's Day, parents buy a large male doll dressed in samurai armor. This protector ensures that their child grows up strong. Some mothers refuse to have such a warrior doll in their home, as they believe it animates at night and stalks around the house.

DARUMA (NOTE UNPAINTED EYES)

On Hina-matsuri, parents buy their daughters lavish sets of dolls representing the entire Heian Imperial Court. Sitting on tiers, with the emperor and empress on the top, courtiers and advisors on descending levels, this doll set can be quite expensive. The set is taken out once a year. Some girls swear that the entire set comes to life and speaks to them of old court tales.

PEASANT MAGIC

HACHIMAKI: headband. Worn across the forehead, it's usually emblazoned in bold kanji touting a desired quality. The hachimaki was originally a charm against evil spirits. Today, it is worn by students and workers as a symbol of physical and spiritual determination.

KAKASHI: scarecrow. Left in the fields too long, kakashi are said to take on sinister airs, possibly becoming yōkai or homes for restless hotoke.

MAWARI-DOHROH: a revolving paper lantern. When lit on moonless nights it is said to reveal invisible spirits.

TOHROH-NAGASHI: paper lantern boat. In August, during the *O-Bon* Festival, the Festival of the Dead, these delicate lantern boats are said to carry the visiting spirits of the dead back down stream and to their homes in the spirit world. This can be quite a sight at night as hundreds of small square boats with flickering candles drift to the open sea. At the keeper's option, some degenerate ritual might use tohroh to summon a large group of hotoke or Mythos creatures.

WARA-NINGYO: straw doll. Old wives' tales hold that if you take a lock of hair from an enemy and put it in a small straw doll made to look like that person, you can exact revenge. Four nights in a row the vengeance-seeker hammers a new nail into the doll pinning it to a shrine gate. On the fourth night something horrible is supposed to happen to the victim. (Keeper discretion is advised.)

Mythic and Sacred Items

Long hidden items of mystical power are brought to light.

Mythic and sacred treasures are most often items that are either remnants of technology from a forgotten age, like the Imperial Regalia, or infused with Mythos magic such as the Shoh of Tankan. Each such item has a unique back-story and sometimes even a temperament of a sort.

Iron Banded Box

This box, roughly the size of a coffin, is made of old and sacred hinoki wood, with wrought iron bands for reinforcement. It contains the arm of the infamous oni king of Rashomon Gate in Kyoto. This arm was severed by the brave samurai hunter Watanabe, one of five retainers in service to the great ogre killer Raiko, who was said to have

wiped out all oni in Japan. This bright crimson arm with a thick black pelt of hair is fully 1.5 meters long, and still looks as fresh as the day it was severed by Watanabe's sharp katana.

Watanabe sealed the arm up in the box after a fierce battle with the ogre, in order to deny the cowardly demon the chance to retrieve its arm. He vowed to never allow the box to be opened in another's presence, for fear it would be the oni in disguise, as it was known that oni could assume human form. In fact, his old nurse got news of his act of bravery and asked to see the horrid arm. After much pleading, he relented and opened the box only to have his nurse reveal herself to be the oni in disguise. Quick witted, he managed to close the box before the ogre could steal back its hand. Vowing revenge, the oni fled and was never heard from again.

IRON BANDED BOX

For the Keeper

This relic of hell brims with power. Any spells associated with oni or Jigoku are boosted by 30% in duration and effect and 30 percentiles in chance of success when cast in the presence of the open box. Seeing the oni's arm for the first time calls for a 1D4 Sanity check. The arm should be watched, as it is still animate and will try to escape the box on its own accord, or else throttle the nearest person (STR 30). The heavy magical wards and glyphs of binding keep the arm secure when the box is closed.

The arm is indeed that of the great oni king of Rashomon Gate, and if the mystically sealed box is opened too much or too long, an oni will Gate from Jigoku in an attempt to reclaim the arm. The oni cannot open or touch the box itself; it must persuade the owner to open the box and show it of his or her free will. It is said that the oni who can reclaim the arm will become the king of all oni and will be able to awaken the Herald of Mappo, thereby ending humanity's final age. Rumors persist that *Higashi Zushi*, one of the four scrolls of *Jigoku Zushi*, also rests in this iron-banded box, clutched in the oni king's hand (see pages 121–123 for more information). The box is known to rest in the Tokyo University Occult Collection.

Mirror of Matsuyama

Popular belief has it that a woman's mirror is an index to her own deepest heart. If she keeps it bright and clear, it follows that her heart is pure and good. So a woman must lay great store in a mirror and use it carefully.

This mirror was bought by a simple but dedicated samurai who lived in the remotest part of Japan and was called upon to go to the capital for business. This was a great hardship as the journey was several months by foot, and horses were not common enough to be available for one as poor as he. Regretting leaving his beloved wife and beautiful daughter, he vowed to return with a gift. He did so unaware of the strange nature of the mirror he bought from a peddler on the streets of the capital of Kamakura, for this mirror was crafted of stolen bronze leavings from the Daibutsu itself. (The Daibutsu, or Great Bronze Buddha, was such a great undertaking that it depleted the nation's supply of bronze for eighty years.)

The poor old samurai returned with his prize and gave it to his joyous wife, along with a beautiful doll for their girl of nine. For a year's breadth, they were happy again as they enjoyed their humble life. Then the mother fell ill. When the husband realized that she would not survive, he became very sad. The mother brought her loyal daughter to her side, told her to watch over her father, and revealed the mirror in a reed box tied with a silk ribbon. The woman told her daughter that the mirror would contain her mother's soul and whenever she looked into it she would find comfort in seeing her mother again.

MIRROR OF MATSUYAMA

The mother breathed her last and the grieving daughter took solace in the mirror. After years of looking in the mirror, a horrible fate overcame the poor girl. Her father noticed that she began to take on the countenance and manners of her mother, which was not a bad thing, for her mother was a good wife and soul mate, but the similarity was eerie. Next, the daughter began locking herself in her room. The father thought maybe the shy girl was troubled because he remarried several years after his first wife's death, at the urging of relatives. By age sixteen, his daughter had become a beautiful young woman. One day soon after her eighteenth birthday the girl suddenly fell ill with the same sleeping weakness as her mother. To the man's sadness, his daughter never recovered and he died a broken man.

For the Keeper

The mirror did indeed store the soul of the mother. Those women who gaze upon it feel compelled to look again and again. Each time a woman gazes at the mirror longer than a second or so, roll her POW on the Resistance Table against the mirror's POW 13. If the gazer loses the match, the mirror drains 1 POW from her. The woman is not aware of the loss, but desires to keep the mirror and to periodically gaze into it, thereby incurring more Resistance Table rolls. (After losing the first POW point, the victim will not voluntarily relinquish the mirror.) In this way, the spirit of the mother slowly possesses the woman and the owner's features blend with the mother's. Once the owner is reduced to 0 POW, her soul is transferred into the mirror and the mother is once again in possession of a body. (Note that the possession process is gradual: the mirror cannot drain more than 1 POW per scene, as determined by the keeper.)

BRONZE MIRROR

It saddened the woman greatly when she took over her daughter. Guilt-ridden, she tried to free her daughter only to discover that her child no longer existed in the mirror after several years, but the girl's soul dissipated and was consumed by the mirror! When she released her daughter's body, it was just a husk and it soon passed away. This hungry spirit holds no such regrets about other potential targets, however. This knowledge may be a way to break the chain.

Today this mirror finds itself in the hands of the vain and beautiful. Often it circulates in Tokyo's red light district, Shinjuku. Occasionally, it finds its way to an up-and-coming starlet of pop singer who mysteriously comes to a bad end.

Misho-Tai

Mysterious sacred polished discs of meteorite, each about the size of an old LP record and two inches thick. Six in number, their significance to the ancients is unknown. What is outstanding about these disks is that they have withstood the test of time so well. Controversially, some scholars propose they are possibly over 50,000 years old. The Misho-Tai are currently on display at the University of Tokyo.

MISHO-TAI

For the Keeper

These artifacts collectively compose a tome from Muvian times, a complete, unaltered volume of the *Shinwa Taizen*. The problem is how to extract the information. Perhaps one way to read the discs is to angle them just so in the light of the sun and the holographic reflection will cast a page on a nearby wall or flat surface, in ancient Muvian. From these circular polished disks of forgotten technology the Japanese derived veneration for polished bronze mirrors and associated them with the goddess Amaterasu.

The Peony Lantern

This is a *chojin*, an old style paper lantern lighted from the inside by a candle decorated with a peony flower motif. This item enables the dead to appear, materialize, and seem human again as long as the lantern is lit. The hotoke's POW activates it. It can burn for four nights, from sunset to sunrise. Those viewing the dead will believe them to be living, breathing creatures.

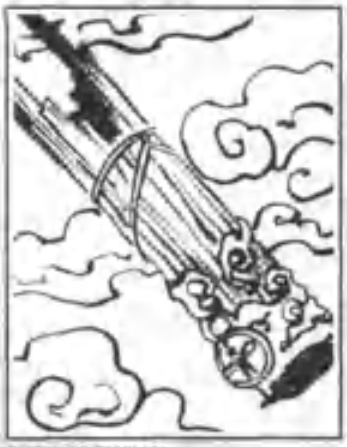
PEONY LANTERN

For the Keeper

Hotoke use this lantern to seduce the living and will try to take the life of a human lover at the finish of the fourth dawn. The hotoke then changes place with the dead human and can live life anew.

The Shoh of Tankan

Believed to be the preserved flute of Heian Court entertainer, Tankan. In the seventh century, Tankan was a Chinese monk and member of a retinue from China that brought many gifts to Prince Shotoku, including a now lost Buddhist statue. This flute, a shoh, when used by a person skilled in traditional Heian court music, produces eerie and haunting melodies. The flute was found in the modern era amongst a collection of Manchurian treasures taken in WWII.



SHOH OF TANKAN

For the Keeper

The flute, now petrified, still works. If the performer plays the flute using certain musical passages from the *Shinwa Taizen*, wild and gyrating notes issue from the object. This has the same effect as the spell Summon Servitor of the Outer Gods.

Sojobo's Shamisen

The shamisen is a traditional Japanese three-stringed instrument strummed like a guitar. For the best sound, its square base and strings are often made of tanned cat skin. This particular shamisen appears to be of a snake-like hide, actually kappa skin, and has an ivory frame. It has passed through the hands of many great shamisen players through the centuries and the melodies from its strings are said to be haunting. It is on display today in the Tokyo Museum of Antiquities in Ueno Park, Tokyo.

For the Keeper

Supposedly crafted by the sojobo himself, the king of the tengu gave this prize to the great priest Kukai in the seventh century for services the priest rendered to the tengu race. Beyond its great durability, playing the instrument has the ability to call upon a member of the tengu race who will arrive in a reasonable amount of time. (The player must know the skill Art (Shamisen) at 51% or better to invoke this power.) The tengu will be partial to the player and at least listen to what the player has to say. Kappa do not like this shamisen as its tanned skin is made from the integument of one of their defeated heroes. They will attack the holder of this instrument without reserve.

SOJOBO'S SHAMISEN

Treasure of Empress Pimiko

Found in a kofun mound in the early 1970s, this archeological treasure trove of the Kofun Period has a horrible history connected with it. No one is certain that the treasure is actually that of Empress Pimiko, but since she was said to be a powerful sorceress, the moniker has stuck. The treasure includes a set of ancient bracelets, ear ornaments and headdress all covered in ritual magatama, comma shaped jewels, and all in remarkable condition. Also included in the treasure are an ancient bronze mirror, and two small clay dogu figurines. Whenever all of the treasure is kept in one place, anyone unfortunate enough to be nearby on the night of a new moon is found with his or her viscera smeared all over the walls. For a while the murders were kept out of the media, but Pimiko's treasure started to gain the same notoriety as several Egyptian mummies. Today, the treasure is carefully scattered in museums throughout Japan.

TREASURE OF EMPRESS PIMIKO

For the Keeper

This treasure is in fact that of the great shaman empress. In her infirmity, and in a last bid for immortality, she infused her soul and the last of her power into her treasure. The bracelets, earrings, and headdress all bear numerous magatama, which still hold usable reserves of magic points (about 150 points). Pimiko's spirit resides collectively in all of the treasure. The mirror, if used by a Shinto shaman, allows communication with the spirit of the empress, and within its shiny surface her beautiful image appears. The dogu figurines are powerfully enchanted guardians who ensure that her possessions are not harmed. The figurines summon hunting horrors, which protect the treasure usually with gruesome results. If a special ceremony is performed at the new moon by a shaman knowledgeable in ancient lore, Empress Pimiko can walk the earth again. The shaman must find a female Japanese with gray eyes—a rare trait—and drape the sacrifice with the raiments. Pimiko will possess the woman, whose features will transform to match the swarthy skin and short stature of the empress.

The Yonaguni Monolith of Okinawa

A ten-ton block of smooth black jade taken from the underwater ruins near Okinawa, the monolith is on display in the Tokyo Museum of History. The entire surface is covered with scrawls of an unknown alphabet. In low light, the carvings glow with a luminescent green.

YONAGUNI MONOLITH

For the Keeper

This is a remnant from the great underwater ruins of one of the last Muvian cities. In its later days it became a colony of R'lyeh. This monolith contains partial passages from the oldest parts of the *Shinwa Taizen* accounts of Mu, as well as references to its neighbor, the land of Lemuria. The script is believed to be hieratic Naacal. The industrious interpreter can also extract the following Mythos spells from the Okinawan monolith: Contact Deity/Cthulhu, Contact Deity/Tsathoggua, Summon Star Spawn of Cthulhu.

Sanshu no Jingi (The Imperial Regalia)

The Imperial Regalia are extremely powerful. They are the catalysts to usher in the Age of Mappo and a major linchpin for the main campaign for *Cthulhu Japan*. However, before you start to worry about game balance or drool at the powers of these items, rest assured that they carry many dangers, are generally inaccessible to ordinary people, and that their abilities are costly to use. With this in mind, an enterprising keeper might choose to weave an entire campaign around just one of the three regalia.

Known as the Imperial Regalia, these three sacred Shinto objects together symbolize the power and authority inherent in the oldest royal lineal family to survive into the modern age.

While the temporal authority of the Japanese emperors has waxed and waned throughout the centuries, they have always been considered spiritual leaders of the country and de facto high priests of the Shinto religion. Myth declares that the imperial line is directly descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu, most powerful of all kami. The divine Yamato line descended to Earth to claim their birthright as rightful rulers and in thanks gave proper homage to their creators. This became the Shinto religion. In turn, to bestow her blessing upon her "children," Amaterasu bequeathed three ancient and sacred objects as part of the covenant with the Yamato line. These three ceremonial objects are bequeathed to the new emperor when the old one retires from public service.

The Real Story

As mentioned in the *Shinwa Taizen*, the *Book of Myth*, the line of emperors can actually trace back their bloodline of one hundred generations of rulers to Mu's golden age. *Sanshu no Jingi*, the three symbolic regalia, the jewel, the mirror, and the sword, represent the divine right of rulership by emperors whose ancestors were themselves taken along with the Imperial Regalia from the sinking continent of Mu. In the hands of a capable high priest, as the emperor often was as the acting head of the Shinto religion, unswerving command of the will of the masses can be mystically obtained with chilling ease, made possible by

the vestiges of Muvian blood that flow in the veins of every Japanese descendant. This triad of powerful items, the sword and mirror constructed of the Muvian golden metal *hagh*, also allows command of the awesome raw fury of the elements. The power of the regalia was unconsciously tapped during WWII by Emperor Hirohito to command total fealty of Japan's citizens to the war effort. It was not until the spell was broken upon the surrender of Japan that the people woke from a mesmerizing haze of blind loyalty to emperor and state.

THE OFFICIAL IMPERIAL REGALIA

WILL OF THE EMPEROR (Optional Resonance Effect)

This spell requires three conditions to be met:

1. The individual possesses all three regalia.
2. The individual is a high priest of the Shinto religion.
3. The individual has a high concentration of Muvian blood, such as a member of the imperial line.

If these three conditions are met, and the caster has access to 100 magic points (usually stored in magatama), at least 300 followers who are willing to donate 1 POW each to the spell, and expends 1D10 Sanity points, he can cast Will of the Emperor. (During World War II, Emperor Hirohito's link with the Imperial Regalia enabled him to unknowingly draw the necessary magic points from the Yasakani no Magatama, while Japanese citizens and government officials unconsciously donated the POW.)

Most people never notice the effects of the spell, because it is gradual in nature; they think it to be the evolution of their own thoughts.

Note that a powerful telepathic spell that is able to alter the temperament of a whole nation is sure to gain the attention of a Great Old One or disturb its dreams long enough to investigate the cause. This might not bode well for the dreams or sanity of the caster.

Will of the Emperor does the following:

Command the Masses

The caster can command any being with at least a trace of serpent folk blood in his or her veins, which includes all ethnic Japanese and those of Korean familial stock. The most notable exception are the *burakumin/eta*, the untouchables, who appear ethnically identical to other Japanese but possess no Muvian blood, thus explaining many generations of shunning by mainstream society as "impure." Note that the small Hokkaido-based population of indigenous Ainu are also immune, as they are descendants of the Caucasoid Lemurians.

The caster rolls against the group's average POW on the Resistance Table. If successful, the target accepts all commands by the caster. To be effective, the target must be able see the form of the caster, whose body glows with a faint green aura. (Only those with serpent folk blood, specifically those who are being targeted, can see this glow; it does not appear in film footage or photographs.) This effect lasts one day for each point of INT the caster possesses.

Inspire the People

With a large group of people, the caster creates an intense bond. Spending 3 magic points every ten minutes, the caster must speak inspiring words with apparent sincerity to keep the audience's attention. Every thirty minutes, the caster must make a successful Persuade roll, or the caster loses his stream and leaves the audience bewildered. At the end of the speech listeners believe what has been said, for a period of 1D3 weeks.

Imperial Charisma

For 1D3 days, increase APP by 1D10. For the same number of days, increase Bargain, Fast Talk, Persuade, and Psychology by 20 percentiles each.

雨の叢雲の剣

Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi

(The Sword of the Billowing Clouds)

Also known as *Kusanagi no Tsurugi* (The Sword Grasscutter/Grass Cutting Sword), one of three symbols of the Emperors' divine right to rule is the sword of the storm god, Susano-Wo. This sword can be classified as a *tachi*; though it is much older than even the Kofun Period, when most *tachi* were crafted. In design it is quite plain, but what is curious is its high durability and fine condition even to this day. Forged from the metal of a rock that fell to earth, the strange alloy was folded over a thousand times to give the sword such a keen edge that very few terrestrial objects resist being cleaved in two by it. The hilt is composed of a polished black jade handle. Upon the handle are carved many symbols which glow a pale green in the dark. The hieroglyphs are most likely a stylized form of Naacal.

As the brother of Amaterasu, Susano-Wo has always been capricious, and generally a troublemaker amongst the pantheon of *amatsu-kami*, greater kami. In fact, it was because of one of his crude pranks that his sister hid in a cave, thus depriving the world of light for many days. In this darkness, demons ruled the earth. In penance, Amaterasu made Susano-Wo surrender all his possessions and banished him to Earth. In his wanderings he had many adventures, and in one of these he slew the eight-headed snake Koshi and from this victory won the powerful sword, Kusanagi no Tsurugi. Eventually Susano-Wo's son, Okuni-Nushi, tricked him out of his prized sword. Amaterasu intervened, stopped a blood-feud, and proclaimed that the sword should lie in the hands of the rulers of the earthly Yamato line. This was a difficult thing to ask of Susano-Wo as he often went on hunts with this sword and he loved it dearly. In the end, he relented and allowed his son to give the weapon to the first emperor.

FOR THE KEEPER

While the mirror always stays at Ise Shrine, the sword has moved with the changing fortunes and palaces of the emperor. Believed lost at the famous battle of Dannoura in 1185 C.E., the original blade is hidden

away at Atsuta Jingu Shrine in Nagoya. Today, a replica rests in the inner vaults of the Emperor's Treasury at the Tokyo Imperial Palace. The public is allowed to see this false sword only on New Year's Day when the imperial gardens are also open for viewing.

Susano-Wo was the living brother of Amaterasu in Muvian times as well as a great sorcerer and worshiper of Yig. He was arrogant and capricious to his subjects. The sword was often used in his spontaneous bouts of anger or rage. When the great exodus occurred and he transformed into a kami, this storminess led to his natural affinity as a god of weather.

The composition of the Sword of the Billowing Clouds is the exotic Muvian metal called lagh, or *shichi* in Japanese, which translates as "lifeblood." The Naacal writing on the black jade hilt includes Susano-Wo's proclamation to be a protector of the isles of Japan as well as the powers of the sword.

Among these are six properties:

Soul Prison

If a fatal blow is struck by the sword, even to a non-terrestrial being, then that creature's life force is sucked into the blade of the sword. The souls of the many killed over the millennia of its existence still reside in the sword. When a power of the sword is used, it drains POW from these spirits as fuel for its magic. Consequently only the most powerful and dangerous spirits long survive in the blade, and some are even able to exert their will beyond their metal prison. (A Yithian is said to be imprisoned in the blade as well as more fell entities.)

Preternatural Edge

The sword has an edge so sharp that it can cut through any physical object on Earth. The weapon can wound or kill creatures that are normally immune to physical attacks. This includes ghosts and other ethereal beings; if the wielder can see the entity, he can attack it. Each time the sword is swung for such a purpose it drains 1 magic point from the wielder and can inflict 5D6 damage. Witnessing a living creature dissected in such a gruesome manner may require a 1D4 Sanity check.

Note that if the Amo no Murakame no Tsurugi cannot draw 1 magic point from the wielder for whatever reason, then the sword will exact 1 POW to perform the cutting blow; failing that it will siphon off one point from some other characteristic. The blade uses life force to cut and so using an inanimate object like an industrial robot arm to wield it will cause no damage to the target.

Rage of Susano-Wo

As the sword of the storm god, it can be used to invoke savage weather at a moment's notice. The sword can invoke the spell effects of Alter Weather and Dragon's Wrath. Halve magic point cost and time to cast.

Command Serpents

Susano-Wo's close affinity with Yig and his charge of snakes gives him the ability to command any serpentine race. By spending 1D10 Sanity points and 10 magic points, the wielder is able to summon and command 100 SIZ of serpentine creatures. This includes mundane snakes as well as serpent people and even tatsu water dragons.

Contact Deity/Susano-Wo

The sword is tied to the spirit of Susano-Wo and so can be used to summon him directly. With the sword, a Contact Susano-Wo spell gains a bonus 40 percentile chance for success.

Ward

If the wielder has no Muvian heritage or a way to circumvent the requirement, the sword invokes Summon Child of Yig, targeting the sword holder.

八咫の鏡

Yata no Kagami

(The Mirror of the Eight Handed Flower)

Japan's emperor holds three sacred insignia of office handed down from the time the gods created the islands of Japan. Among these treasures is the Mirror of the Eight Handed Flower, also known as the Mirror of Amaterasu, the goddess of the sun and progenitor of the imperial line. A mirror is considered requisite for a woman to possess. An old saying goes, "As the sword is the soul of the samurai, so is the mirror the soul of a woman." Mirrors have held a special, sacred significance since ancient times. The most ancient of mirrors, and also the most powerful, are disks of lagh, highly polished on one side and intricately detailed on the back with scenes of Japan.

The Mirror of Amaterasu, the "illustrious goddess," is within the main sanctuary in Ise-Jingue, the Shrine to the Sun Goddess in Ise on the island of Honshu. This ancient lagh mirror is incredibly plain in appearance. The front is slightly tarnished but a reflection can still be seen, and the back is decorated with reliefs of a few magatama. Around the entire edge of the circular mirror is a strange script much older than Japanese. Some scholars believe it archaic Hebrew, but it is actually Naacal, the language of Mu. This mirror was an actual physical possession of the high sorceress Amaterasu when she was a living sorceress in Mu.

FOR THE KEEPER

The reflection of the mirror is quite special: those who possess blood of the original Muvian progenitors, such as the imperial line, will see a reflection in the polished surface. The stronger the blood, the clearer the image. If, say, a foreigner with no sanguine heritage gazes in the mirror, he sees only a reflection of his surroundings. (A spell, Purity of the Blood, performs a similar function.)

While it is true that the mirror is able to determine that a person is of Muvian lineage, it should be spelled out that for many generations human Muvians sorcerously interbred with serpent people. The "purity of blood" detected is actually how much of the hybrid DNA is extant in a modern Japanese.

Since ancient times, the mirror also had secondary uses for divination and scrying. Female Shinto shamans would channel and contact the sun goddess Amaterasu, who would in turn show the priestess either a scene from the future (same casts as the spell Look to the Future), or a scene from ancient Mu in its heyday—as per Create Scrying Window, but only events in Mu can be viewed.

Finally, possession of the mirror increases any chance to Call, Contact, or Invoke a power of Amaterasu by 40 percentiles.

Ward

If the wielder has no Muvian heritage nor any way to circumvent the requirement, yet tries to use the mirror, Amaterasu's Gaze is invoked and the mirror holder is the target.

八尺瓊の勾玉

Yasakani no Magatama

(The Necklace of Jade)

This sacred object is a heavy softball-sized black jade stone shaped like an egg. Very little is known of the whereabouts or nature of this sacred object as it is almost always within close proximity to the living emperor, even when he travels. The jewel is believed to be made of a very large chunk of pure green jade polished to a sheen. It is said to have the shape of a magatama, a comma-shaped jewel, carved in relief on it. Other than that, it is a smooth stone. The public at large is falsely led to believe that a nondescript jade magatama necklace on display at the imperial palace in Tokyo is the actual imperial object, not the ominous egg shaped stone hidden from view.

The Yasakani no Magatama, also known as the Gyoku, is believed to be the gift of the goddess Ama-no-Uzume, whose name means "whirling." Amaterasu had gone into seclusion in a cave, plunging the entire world into night and chaos. It had been Uzume, the dance-goddess of fertility, naked except for jewelry adorned with hundreds of magatama jewels, who had performed obscene and provoking dances that caused laughter among the other gods and aroused the hiding sun goddess's curiosity. When she emerged from her cave to investigate, the other gods pulled her out of the cave and so Amaterasu brought light again to the world. Uzume, thankful for her success, gave the Yasakani no Magatama, her largest and most ensorcelled gem, to the radiant goddess. This gem, in turn, became one of the items given to the Yamato founding line of emperors.

FOR THE KEEPER

As the jewel is a gift of the Shinto goddess of dance, all powers of this relic must be activated using dance as part of the ritual. Uzume was a good friend of Amaterasu and the royal family in Mu. She devised many spells that could be performed using dance, and these often found their way into later folk dances. Her charge was as co-guardian of the Floating Bridge to other realms on Mount Takachiho with her husband. When the great cataclysm struck Mu and Atlantis, she and her husband were at the vanguard of the conflict. She was first to fall to the obscene hordes, but not before she invested the last of her power into opening one of the major Gates of exodus to the Japanese islands.

Purify Water

Uzume was the goddess of good health, and so when the stone is dropped in foul water, the holder can transmute 100 cubic gallons of water per magic point spent to fresh, drinkable water. This purified water is also important for many Shinto ceremonial rites.

Magic Reservoir

As the ultimate magatama, the Yasakani no Magatama increases the natural potency of any sorcerer or priest, giving them a 20 percentile bonus for spell casting. In addition, the egg-shaped stone can hold up to 250 magic points or 100 POW.

Open Floating Bridge to the Heavens

At the cost of 1D8 Sanity points, 2 POW, and 20 magic points, the Yasakani no Magatama (in combination with seven other nearly identical jade eggs) can open a portal to the old location of Mu. That is now the submerged Gateway to the extra-dimensional prison of the Great Dragon of Mappo, or Mappo no Ryûjin.

If this Gate is opened with the other two regalia physically in the possession of the caster, it can start the end of the Mappo Age by opening Gates to all the lairs, negating the Elder Signs and wards on all the Great Old Ones, and locking open Gates to Jigoku and the Heavenly Realms. Each one of the seven "sister" jade eggs to the Yasakani no Magatama bears a different mythical animal symbol carved on it. Four images are known: kappa, tengu, dragon, and kirin. ☯

WOMAN WITH MIRROR, ARTIST UNKNOWN

Scroll Three: People

SECTION ONE:

LIGHT AND SHADOW

光から陰

Wherein new heroes are introduced, and schemes are set in motion.

Act 1

The clatter of dishes and the smell of steaming ramen wafted through the second story window. Despite all the disadvantages of this cramped and rundown Shinjuku office, it did have its perks. Taro grew up on the white sticky noodles in chilly Hokkaido, and with frequent late nights here in the office, the atmosphere below kept him wonderful company. Especially considering the nature of their work. Yes, especially that. Of late, he'd really come to have a great appreciation for the simple pleasures in life. They carried the least pain.

Taro cleaned the fog from his thick coke-bottle glasses for the sixth time tonight. His prescription genuinely worried him. His eyes had progressively worsened since he finished Todai. His mother might be right; he might be blind like his uncle by the time he hit forty. Peeling himself out of the moldy-smelling lime-green chair, Taro stood up, stretched, and walked over to the ancient porcelain sink to splash water on the greasy film coating his glasses. Awkwardly rinsing them off, he put the thick lenses back on and the world came back into sharp focus. The tired man gave himself a cursory look in the dirty mirror above the sink; the face in the reflection was not much cleaner. He wiped the mirror with a towel. The unshaven face of a twenty-nine-year-old man looked back at him. With a bowl cut of jet black hair, thick eyebrows, and pale peach skin that rarely ever saw sun, he was of average looks to most Japanese. When they thought he wasn't listening, some of his critics mockingly used "Todai Toady" as a none too pleasant moniker.

Taro sighed. He was getting slovenly in his old age. Surely Mother would pull him by the ear and call him a no-account for looking so disorderly. She always said, "How you appear to people on the outside reflects your character on the inside."

But no one could see into this private sanctuary, something of a rarity in Japan. Avoiding the hustle and bustle just beyond the doors, Taro even indulged in the guilty pleasures of eating in solitude, only having to deal with the delivery boy he paid 5000 yen a week. Every night, a steaming bowl of ramen accompanied the knock of the boy who, spooked by the office, was always gone by the time Taro reached the door. The boy was a modern day *ronin*: a student who needed all the money he could get from his part time jobs to re-take the university entrance exams again that year. Taro never had that problem. He could not imagine being barred from school, directionless and without a future, for two or three years. Taro was always top of his class in everything.

Staring at the sullen man in the mirror, his reverie was disturbed by a single light tap on the door, followed by the rumble of young feet descending the claustrophobically narrow spiral stairs.

Ah! Ten o'clock. Taro hurried to the door and found his usual styrofoam delivery box at his doorstep. Next to the large covered bowl of steaming ramen sat a small stack of the latest books he requested from Tokyo University, his alma mater, along with his favorite detective manga series. Collecting his latest cache, he returned to a desk stacked with books, newspapers, and ledgers, all precariously balanced on the Japanese cypress surface. Taro cleared away enough that a spot of bare wood could be seen. He began to open the tied bundle of books. As he did this, a series of letters fluttered out between the books onto the sticky floor. Exasperated, Taro bent down and gathered up the scattered envelopes. Upon seeing the dates, he sucked in his breath through his teeth. Damn kid! Some of this mail was two weeks old! He would have to talk to that ronin on his next visit about an "adjustment" in pay.

Sitting down to the ramen meal and sifting through the mail, Taro noticed a bulging yellow envelope with extensive taping and grease pencil markings. A Kyoto address. As Taro opened it, a sharp knock startled him. Frozen, he was unable to decide upon a course of action until a louder, more insistent knock followed. Strange, both his partners were off for the day. He absently leapt up to get the door and spilled hot ramen in his lap. Taro involuntarily yelped from the brief pain. By the time Taro reached the door, he had managed to brush most of the scalding liquid off his corduroy pants and tattered brown blazer.

On the wet doorstep sat a thick parcel. Scanning the night sky, street lamps revealed it was raining now with an occasional rumble of thunder. Now that he thought about it, he didn't recall hearing anybody go up or down the iron staircase.

Taro glanced down at the package near his feet. This unexpected visit made him uneasy. Was this a message to discourage further investigation into that bizarre religious cult he'd had been inquiring about? They'd uncovered its existence a few months back, after the *Hin-no-Maru* slayings. He hadn't yet dug up a lot of information on the cult.

This was a side interest, between cases. But so secret was it that even its name was hard to come by; with a name something like "Tears of . . ." or some such.

Taro clumsily clattered down the spiral staircase, only to see a dark, empty street. Heat radiated off the pavement as he wiped rain from his glasses and squinted again into the blackness. For a moment, he glimpsed a tall figure in a trench coat but the form disappeared into the inky shadows down an alley. Well, he wasn't about to pursue. Sighing, the short man turned around rubbing the back of his neck and looked up at the neon sign for his office in katakana. *Saiō Ate Agyenshii*, "Third Eye Agency" in English. Its green filaments seemed okay; the flickering neon eyeball cycled its blink like it should.

Well, whoever it was, he was gone now. Practicing what Ryoma had taught him, he closed his eyes and tried to remember all the details he could. The trench coat was beige, no, more tan. He couldn't see a face, but he definitely caught the hair. Who could forget something like that in Japan? A high blond flattop. Maybe dyed. That was about all he could divine of the figure. Scratching his head, he trudged back up the stairs and picked up the surprisingly heavy canvas parcel still waiting patiently at the foot of the door. As he lifted it, a sudden wave of nausea washed over him.

Breathing deeply and clearing his thoughts, the discomfort passed. He locked the door, nervously checked the lock twice, and settled into the lime-green chair. Placing the parcel on his lap, Taro slowly placed the flat of his palms on the soggy parcel and closed his eyes, praying to the bodhisattva Kannon for protection.

Filling his mind's eye, the murky image of a ponderous basalt city. Vague shadowy creatures lazily flew overhead in a sky of rich green. Trying to shift his vision, to turn his head, it was then that he realized that the perspective was fixed. The scene seemed of a timeless, alien nature. An indefinable and yet expansive eeriness to the view caused raw panic to eat away at the edge of his awareness. Just out of Taro's range of view was a sense of something stirring. The turquoise structures of the alien city were beset by a crawling shadow of immense proportions. There was something disconcerting about the shadows—almost a physical manifestation extending shadowy pseudopods across the ziggurats in the city.

Feeling somewhat repulsed by the organic quality to the shadow, it dawned on him that the shadow belonged to something large—large on a scale scarcely conceivable. Something behind him. A shiver snaked up his back and breathing became difficult. His vision was assaulted by a strobing succession of horrifying gore-filled images of tortured people. As they flashed through his mind, his violently trembling hands broke contact with the parcel. Taro burst up, and the still unopened package tumbled to the floor. He ran to the sink, fighting back the bile. Splashing some cool water on his face and hands made him feel better.

Pulling out his silk handkerchief, he dabbed his face and then used it to pick up the package. Taking his father's tanto from the ornamental stand on the desk, he quickly sliced open the package and dumped the contents on his chair. Out first came a videotape labeled with magic marker, "Watch First." Two CD cases fell atop the videotape, as did some minidiscs, various manila folders, and an oval jade stone with a symbol he didn't recognize. Being a bit of a computer *otaku*, he picked up the CDs first. One was labeled in the same sweeping script, "Put in your computer"; the other was bare and unlabeled. From the gold sheen, he guessed they were DVDs. He set them on his computer tower and grabbed the videotape. Moving his ramen bowl to the computer desk, a shaky Taro popped the tape into his VCR. A silhouetted figure appeared on the screen.

YHISD Profile #3IA-TW-29-M/AB

Name: Taro Watanabe **Age:** 29

Chinese Birth Year: Monkey **Blood Type:** AB

Occupation: Associate Professor of Parapsychology, Tokyo University

Distinguishing Marks: Unkempt bowl-cut black hair. Favors an old-style brown suede blazer with leather elbow patches. Must wear round coke bottle glasses for his weak eyes.

Personality: Though self conscious and insecure, when the opportunity to gain knowledge presents itself he loses all inhibitions and becomes authoritative in the pursuit of knowledge. Sometimes even recklessly so. Grimly driven on the quest for parting the veil between life and death, he feels more comfortable with spirits and his books than around people.

Notable Traits/Habits: Preoccupation with cleaning his glasses, poor hygiene. He is of average looks and thus able to blend.

Specialties: Ph.D. in Parapsychology. Fluent in English, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese.

History: Mr. Watanabe's family includes a long line of Buddhist Shingon priests. Instead of following his ancestors' footsteps, Mr. Watanabe attended the most prestigious university in Japan and reached associate professorship before being asked to go on an open-ended sabbatical (euphemism for suspension) because of unorthodox research methods and theories. Due to this background as well as personal interest, Prof. Watanabe is a walking encyclopedia concerning modern paranormal phenomenon in Japan.

Affiliations: Tokyo University ("Todai"), Third Eye Agency, Kyoto's Kosanji Temple (Shingon sect), personal contacts within his graduating class.

Surveillance Comments: Two exploitable weaknesses of Watanabe are his reckless passion for esoteric knowledge and his blind compassion for the perceived underdog. YHI field investigators speculate that Watanabe may himself possess limited psychic power, possibly an advanced form of psychometry.

—Yotsubishi Heavy Industries
Tokyo Security Division
Surveillance Unit

LEFT TO RIGHT: TARO WATANABE, YUKIKO MIYAMOTO, RYOMA MIYAMOTO, SACHIKO MUSHA-NO-KOJI, KAZUYA

Act II

Ryoma checked the address twice.

All that was on this crowded corner was a Lawsons convenience store and a Yakuza-owned strip club. A green translucent ball of light faded into view on his left. Great! This was all he needed! At least she hadn't spoken up yet. Good. All the better to help him think. Why was she tagging along anyway? The last thing he needed right now was her nagging. He nervously began fiddling with the silver butane lighter in his pocket, the lines on his face deepening.

The drizzle didn't affect the hovering globe in the least. He pulled his trench coat up at the collar over his black turtleneck, to cut some of the chill in the air. A cat drove by on the wet pavement with a hiss. The street glistened with a shiny gloss from the rain. As if in defiance to the worsening weather, the globe began to burn with a bright green flame not reflected in the shiny asphalt below.

He was getting tired of this wild goose chase. He dragged a hand through his short silver-peppered hair in an attempt to become more alert, revealing his shoulder strap to the stray passers-by. Unconsciously, due to his old training, he quickly shoved his hands back in his pockets.

Ryoma grunted. Well, fifteen years on the National Police Force was telling him he was in the right place. Working in the labyrinth of Tokyo over the years served him well in his new life. He was beginning to wonder, though, about his new chosen career path. This neighborhood reminded him of Taro. Crazy Taro, who decided to set up shop in the red light district near Shinjuku station. Taro argued that the place might be a dump, but at least they were in the center of Tokyo and the rent couldn't be beat. Despite these assurances, the rent could buy a penthouse apartment or office suite in any Western city.

But no, the ex-cop had no other options left for his personal mission. The itako had assured him on the phone that this person he was to meet was exactly what Ryoma needed to solve his problem. He had lost his inspector job because of his problem, and most of his friends as well. The psychologist said that he should take a voluntary leave, but he understood he was being asked to leave the job. They didn't need to spell it out for him. Half of his life, more than that including his dilemma, was sunk into his job, and in one messy month it was all gone. There wasn't much a police inspector could do in the public sector after getting kicked off the force like that.

The lighter felt cold in his hand as he rotated it.

Ryoma continued walking down the artificial canyons that made up Tokyo. This area was a lot dirtier than the bright neon-splashed areas around the train stations. He was thankful he wasn't headed for the main thoroughfare around the station; shoving his way through a sea of black hair wasn't his idea of fun today. But still, he was Japanese and you had to deal with obstacles.

If you can't avoid them, endure them. The weariness he was feeling was due to Taro. He was a good kid, but to Ryoma it felt for all the world like he was training another rookie. Ryoma walked behind the Lawson's store, but all that was in this side alley were staggering drunken salarymen, Yakuza, and adult prostitutes dressed in schoolgirl sailor-suit outfits. All were oblivious to the globe quickly coalescing into a human form. All except for Ryoma.

From within his skull a sardonically sweet feminine voice came forth: "You're lost again, aren't you, husband?"

"At last she speaks!" mocked Ryoma out loud. "What is it, Yukiko?" He unconsciously glanced around to find that the street was deserted enough.

"You finally found time to spare from your new hobby to help me, and I want to make sure you don't mess it up with your policeman's pride. Or is it from your ancestor, that—that swordsman!" the yūrei imperiously retorted.

YHISD Profile #3IA-RM-46-S/O

Name: Ryoma Miyamoto **Age:** 46

Chinese Birth Year: Snake **Blood Type:** O

Occupation: Retired Police Inspector of Criminal Investigation

Distinguishing Marks: Mr. Miyamoto favors wearing a gray trench coat his wife gave him as a twentieth anniversary gift. Getting up in years his black hair is generously peppered with silver highlights on his temples. Some co-workers say he bears a remarkable resemblance to the Japanese movie star Ken Takura *(Black Rain)*.

Personality: Level headed, this man has seen the worst side of humanity and has come through it stoically. In his most heated moments Miyamoto can be a bull-headed macho type. He always appears relaxed but his power of observation is razor sharp.

Notable Traits/Habits: Mr. Miyamoto smokes a disproportionate amount of tobacco and has done so since his wife's death. Ryoma is a very traditional, old-school Japanese, at least as traditional as you can get these days, but he also has a good head on him and is open to the new ideas and the unexplainable.

Specialties: Taken from a work-related psychological evaluation: "Ryoma Miyamoto has a great deal of determination to get to the bottom of things. He derives great personal satisfaction seeing wrongs righted. He is very strong willed when he thinks he is in the right, but is experienced enough to concede if he finds out otherwise. He will always compromise for the common good but not before grumbling a bit."

History: Miyamoto was forced to retire early due to failure of the yearly psychological evaluation after 15 years on the force. Miyamoto's family line is the same as the legendary swordsman who wrote *The Book of Five Rings*. His family prides itself on martial prowess with *iaido*, sword drawing, and *kendō*, sword fencing. Ryoma is a master in both and used to teach kendō to young recruits at the police station in his spare time.

Affiliations: Tokyo Police Chief Shinji Fujiyama, Third Eye Agency, family dojo, various street contacts.

Surveillance Comments: Ryoma's wife, Yukiko, died five years ago in what was believed to be an unfortunate accident. Ever since then he has buried himself in his work. That is, until the forth anniversary of her death, when Ryoma began to act erratically—often seen talking aloud to himself and becoming irrational when questioned.

—Yotsubishi Heavy Industries
Tokyo Security Division
Surveillance Unit

Ryoma softened his demeanor a bit; she always knew what buttons to push. "Look, dear, I don't think Musashi Miyamoto has anything to do with this. And, I do know what I'm doing, you know."

"Is that so?" Yukiko huffed. "Then how come I have been waiting for almost two years for you to discover my murderers? And what does it have to do with the box of my uncle's papers that went missing the same time I was killed?"

Ryoma turned to her floating pale form and put up his hands. "Okay, okay, that's enough. I heard this before—"

"And you'll hear it again and again until I'm free!" Skulls appeared in her eyes as Yukiko's crossed arms draped in an old style white burial kimono. Not wanting to provoke Yukiko and deal with the most unpleasant visage she could manage, the actual state of her rotting and decayed corpse which had been getting progressively horrifying as time had passed, he swallowed his next remark.

He just stared at her. Her soft features reminded him why he married her so many years ago. If he only had slowed down enough to give her the child she wanted. . . .

"What? What?" Yukiko quipped. She wasn't ready for this change of tack by Ryoma. Perhaps people *do* change after all, she thought.

Ryoma looked past her silky hair. "I was just thinking about our honeymoon, Yuki. I—I'll see if I can help you find peace. I think maybe the reason why I've procrastinated is that I'll miss you when you're truly gone. Yukiko, I still love you, you know."

Yukiko smiled gently, "I know Ryo, I know. But I'm in such pain and I want to rest. You don't know the horrors I have seen on this side. I think you would get more than suspended from the force if you saw what I've seen. I don't mind helping your friends, but you must keep your promise."

Ryoma patted the pockets of his drab gray trench coat and pulled out his pack of Larks. The silver plated lighter already in his hand, he held it up to strike it and looked beyond it at Yukiko. He inadvertently read the inscription on the metal case—*To my heart's love, Yukiko*—and shuddered. Standing at the crossroads, he took a long drag on the cigarette to clear his head—that was about the only thing that he could rely on anymore. Hell, he mused, the Larks had done more to hurt him in reality than anything else.

Nicotine surged through his system and he set out to ask the clerk in Lawsons for directions. Out of the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of a tall man in a tan duster for the fourth time tonight. Was he being followed? Why bother? From the blond spiky hair, Ryoma surmised that the man was probably a local Yakuza seeing who was on his turf. Nothing to worry about. He might not have his badge anymore, but he still had a license for his handgun. At least his ex-boss gave him that dignity.

Act III

Under the shelter of the wooden temple hall she sat and patiently waited.

She did not relish finding refuge in a temple of all places, nor did she feel welcome. She rarely, if ever, paid homage to Buddhist doctrine or its sects. As if to emphasize disapproval by the temple, a cold gust of rain reached under the overhang to chill her even more than she was in her already thin ceremonial attire. She felt fortunate that there were no Buddhist priests to deal with tonight as her bright white kimonos and blood red *hakama* skirt made her affiliation obvious to any trained eye. But the smell of old incense masking the odor of death that clung to all Buddhist temples was reminder enough of where she was. All such places numbed and weakened her powers. As an *itako*, or kami shamaness, she felt at home in a Shinto shrine, the older and original religion of the Japanese. She looked out at the dreary night and became irritated at her already failing eyesight. She was only twenty-five. Was she to lose her vision so soon? Chanting a prayer she shifted her vision into the spirit realms. The scene was mostly unchanged, as few spirits or lost souls hung around empty Buddhist temples.

YHISD Profile #3IA-SM-22-D/A

Name: Sachiko Musha-no-Koji **Age:** 22

Chinese Birth Year: Dragon **Blood Type:** A

Occupation: Itako; Shinto Shamaness. Acts as vessel for channeling kami and spirits.

Distinguishing Marks: The itako is never seen without being clothed in the traditional garb of a shrine maiden: a bleach white kimono and an orange-red hakama skirt. She also carries various wards and talismans on her person within the volumous folds of her attire. Musha-no-koji's stature is also notable, as she is remarkably tiny for a modern Japanese woman, being scarcely 5' tall.

Personality: The itako only speaks when spoken to and when she does reply, usually her words carry some weight in their portent. This young woman is quite humorless and serious about every situation life presents to her.

Notable Traits/Habits: She appears preoccupied with cleanliness and her personal appearance to the point of obsession. This may have to do with the tenets of her religion, however, and just indicate her level of faith.

Specialties: Ms. Musha-no-Koji appears to have the power to act as a conduit for kami and ghosts as well as commanding varying forms of prognostication.

History: Ms. Musha-no-Koji's family name is ancient and such variants of Japanese names are rarely found today. Such a moniker would be indicative of a clan that has maintained lineage back to Prince Shotoku's time in the Heian period. Prior to the adoption of Buddhism such names were common, lending to the strong influence of Buddhism. However, not much more about her background can be divined other than the known facts; Sachiko Musha-no-Koji was taken from her family at puberty by a blind old woman and took up residence in Aomori Prefecture in a Shinto complex known to be a haven for *itako*, blind soothsayers.

Affiliations: Third Eye Agency.

Surveillance Comments: Very little is known about this young woman. Only her affiliation with the Third Eye Agency has afforded her any notoriety.

—Yotsubishi Heavy Industries
Tokyo Security Division
Surveillance Unit

Out of boredom, and to forget where she was, she began to daydream, a dangerous luxury for an itako who had to be wary of involuntary possession at any time. Though weakened from the sanctity of the Buddhist temple, the itako felt the definite approach of a very powerful kami. Bracing herself for possession, she instead found her spirit vision replacing the temple grounds with a vividly resplendent sunny day, and calm skies. The itako was stunned by the reality of the ethereal vision. Suspecting who this might be, she became nervously excited—she had seen this kami only twice before in her entire life: her birth and her initiation.

Meekly she stood up and stumbled towards the temple grounds. Her legs already trembling, the small woman fell to her knees in genuine reverence. From out of the burning golden disk in the sky descended a visage that rivered her gaze. An immense feminine form clad in an ornate silk kimono resolved itself. Coming nearer, the glint of the sun's rays could be seen reflected in the exquisite bronze mirror cradled in the thin white right hand of the figure. The face was of indescribable beauty and the silken black hair was adorned with hundreds of comma-shaped jewels that sparkled like the firmament. Most astonishingly, the figure grew larger and larger upon approach to the temple grounds, filling the entire sky with its form. At this point, the itako was shedding tears of joy at the grace and beauty of what could only be Amaterasu Omikami. The vision towered over the young woman like a graceful sunrise. In a thin and weak voice of a girl, the itako croaked her salutation:

"Welcome O great sun goddess, mother of emperors, matron of the entire Japanese pantheon of spirits, and guardian of Japan."

Barely able to make out any features of the deity's face in the wash of heavenly light, the itako could only sense a beneficent smile and felt a wash of warmth through her entire being.

A voice like no other, like a whisper of silk and bearing a regality of the utmost gentility, echoed through every fiber of the sun-washed temple grounds:

"Sachiko Musha-no-Koji, you were chosen at your first bleeding. With that selection you lost all of your childhood friends who feared you and your wildly fluctuating power. They called you itako as a curse. Your parents did not know what to do. After months of anguish and rejection, a kindly old blind woman came to your mother and offered to take you off her hands. You hated your mother for that, but the lady was nice enough to you and showed you how to control the terrifying powers you had tried to forget about. She was patient and helpful, but with a certain . . . resignation.

"For several years, things went well as you mastered your latent abilities and began to have a perverse pride in your uniqueness. After a difficult encounter with a kami, the old woman felt you had matured enough to learn the full truth.

"You are a vessel for kami; this you already guessed. She also complimented you on being the strongest kami maiden she had ever trained or known. But there were things, unhappy things the old woman would have you know about your role in life. First, she explained, used as a vessel for spirits, your body wears from the strain. It takes energy to summon and channel powerful spirits and this has a cost. It will shorten your life for one.

"The old woman who looked eighty by your guess informed you that she was only forty-five. Next, she said that your power sprang from your purity. And thus you would have to remain pure—you may never marry, you may never know the companionship of a male. You will never have children and you will become sterile soon enough from channeling. The old woman then gestured toward her ruined eyes, covered with a white cloth, and told you that you also will lose the gift of sight at an early age. For the old woman, it was a mere twenty-five seasons. However, with this loss of one gift, other gifts would double and your other senses would sharpen, allowing you to navigate the world as easily as if you had eyes. Finally, the old woman told you to concentrate on your own life and think hard. Doing this, you closed your eyes and received a vision: An old woman in rags, back bent deeply from age; the sudden swipe of an enraged monk freeing the old woman's head from her wretched form. You opened your eyes stunned and shaking. You knew instinctively that this was you at your moment of death. The old woman then said sadly that you were now a true itako, for you knew the date of your own demise and you could give a similar dark precognition to any brave enough to request it.

"All this you know, but We repeat it for the sake of future legend, for you are one of Our most powerful and, more importantly, pure shamans of this age. We have need of you as a vessel—a great conflict is on the horizon, child. We see a conflict that will never allow Our children to see dawn again.

"A power is out there child, older than this ancient world. Against this power, even We, the most powerful spirit on this plane, are helpless. Even the much-vaunted Bosatsu can do nothing, even if they broke their vows of non-intervention. This timeless and dark power works through all cultures in ways that are oddly restrained by the rules of society. When we created the world for you, Our children, We also gave you rules, customs, and laws. The reasons We gave you these laws are manifold: to oil the wheels of society, yes; to pay proper respect to beings within the Six Realms, yes, but make no mistake that the primary reason was to keep those we usurped at bay and our children safe from the Great Old Ones.

"But, alas, Our modern children have forgotten the why-fors and the wherewithals of Our laws. They now bow out of habit, not because a slow bow would get them disemboweled by an angry oni fiend. They use polite language to welcome shoppers to multi-level stores, not to calm the nerves of fox spirits who are naturally quick to take offense.

"For you see, it is the greatest desire of these dark powers that humanity hang itself with its own rope. With all Our power, even We cannot act directly. No, this is a fabric woven by Our children and it is the children who must unravel this quickly closing pattern before the loom breaks.

"We know you accept Our pronouncements without hesitation, but know you this: Our special investment will put a severe strain on your body, one from which it will never recover. It will scarcely matter if we are unsuccessful, but you pay a great cost for success. It is Our hope that it will be one that provides a future for Japan, for one does not exist on the present path which Our children travel.

"To aid you and your companions, We will invest you with a small fraction of Our power to maintain Our link to you. When the time comes, We will manifest physically through you, Sachiko Musha-no-Koji. In the meantime, watch, listen, learn, and aid your companions when you can. Solve this riddle."

The goddess lowered the hand mirror to the ground for Sachiko to gaze upon. For Sachiko, it was a body length mirror. She looked upon her image to see it suffused with a golden radiance and her image became a duplicate of the massive vision before her. At this, gold bolts of energy shot from the image in the bronze mirror and quickly overwhelmed the itako. Losing control of her body Sachiko involuntarily curled into a fetal ball and convulsed repeatedly on the hard packed dirt.

Act IV

After the electrical surges through her system subsided Sachiko opened her eyes to see the sunlight quickly fading like a mirage into a rain drenched night. The fading figure of Amaterasu superimposed upon an approaching man in a gray trench coat. The red ember of a cigarette hovered around his shadowed face like a firefly and a burning ball of green fire, a *hito-dama*, hovered next to him. Upon seeing her prone form, he rushed to Sachiko's side.

Ryoma was visibly surprised to find Sachiko here. For Sachiko, it was all the medium could do to stand, so fiercely did her tottering and weakened form tremble. The itako curtly bowed to Yukiko in recognition of her presence but still said nothing to either one.

Ryoma, oblivious to what was now a downpour, was visibly angry. "What's this? Is this some sort of itako joke? You tell me on the phone to come and meet someone important here to solve my wife's murder, and here you sit waiting for me? Are you that special someone?"

Sachiko weakly intoned, "Ryoma, you know that I don't use modern implements when I don't have to. I didn't phone you. I've already explained before that a Shinto priestess cannot help your wife as she has *sworn* to resolve—purely a result of Buddhist contamination in her belief system."

"Maybe I can help," said a baritone voice from the darkness. Both looked in the direction of the voice. At the temple entrance gate stood, wrapped in shadows, a very tall man leaning against one of the entrance's support beams.

Ryoma's trained deductive powers went to work. Yes, this was definitely the man who he had seen in the last several hours. He was quite sure of it. The man was shadowing him, but why didn't he approach Ryoma before?

"Because I wanted to meet both of you at once." The man casually responded as he stighted and sauntered into the cool white light of the street lamps.

Ryoma was quite sure now—this was the man. He assessed the stranger again to get a gauge on what he was dealing with. He had a leather duster, easily a month's wages for most people, and a dyed blond flattop with shoulder length hair that marked him as Yakuza. Judging from all the gold rings, the Armani, and the diamond stud earrings, this was a Yakuza successful at his work.

Sachiko, finally regaining her wits, had warning bells going off about the being. This was not a mortal man.

"Like the duster?" taunted the gangster, who smiled revealing gold capped teeth. "Aw, you look exhausted. Though I can hardly blame you, shaman—after all, you've just had an audience with the Queen."

Both Ryoma and Sachiko were speechless. It dawned on them that the man had almost seemed to answer thoughts.

"And it won't be the last time, Ryoma Miyamoto and Sachiko Musha-no-Koji. I'll get things started: I called you both to be here. My name is Kazuya." At that the Yakuza made a deep mock bow to his audience.

"Okay, Yakuza," said Ryoma refusing to dignify a formal name, "I'm gathering you are more than what you seem."

"That I am. You are smart for an ex-inspector." His voice became almost a growl as his eyes burned with a green flame. "But you're right; I am more than a man—much, much more." At that Kazuya took off his duster to reveal a naked chest except for an elegant silk tie. Like a canvas, every visible millimeter of his skin was covered with highly detailed and intricate tattoos. Most notable were the massive tiger and dragon fighting on the center of his chest. Kazuya retorted "Be careful not to look too long at my beauties as you may find your self a part of the picture, so to speak. They really have a life of their own, y'know."

Sachiko made a quiet comment under her breath "Don't anger him, Ryoma, this being is very dangerous."

As if to confirm this, the tattoos began to slowly swirl and crawl across the Yakuza's body. One small tattoo of a mantis migrated up from his arm, stretched a shadow off his shoulder, and then the black ink transmogrified into a large green praying mantis, which perched on Kazuya's shoulder.

Ryoma had seen a lot, but still found himself rooted to the spot by the Yakuza's little magic show. Ryoma tried his best to put on a bored mask and with bravado said. "Okay, very impressive. So what's the point? Why did you summon us?"

Satisfied with the full attention of his audience, Kazuya took the living mantis from his shoulder and pulled on his duster, replacing the mantis on his shoulder. "The Queen is right. There is something dark and foreboding on the horizon. Something that humanity might not survive. And while it won't directly affect me, at least immediately, I do need pawns and worshipers."

"I knew it! You're the *Yakuza-Kami-sama*. One of the younger generation of spirits that were spawned in this age!" The previously mute Yukiko blurted her thought aloud with the vigor of a schoolgirl. To which both Ryoma and Sachiko flashed her dirty looks that spelled out "idiot."

"At your service." Kazuya again made a deep bow. "Point in fact, though, I do have a *few* years on me. After all, the *Yao-chan*, as I call them, have been running amok since the 1500s. I try to stay up to date, though.

"Anyway, Amaterasu is correct: it's about to hit the fan. And while I like a little chaos, it's profitable after all, if this plot comes to fruition Japan and the whole earth will be plunged into *pure* chaos. To make things really simple." at this Kazuya smiled sweetly at Yukiko who in turn blushed, "all Six Realms of reality, that's the heavens, hells, human realms, realm of the dead, ad nauseum, will combine into one. Me, I kinda like things the way they are. Having this realm overrun by ravaging yôkai, oni, hungry ghosts, the damned, and asuras is not my idea of fun."

Sachiko found herself hesitantly asking, "D-Did you call down Amaterasu Omikami?"

Kazuya shrugged, "That was a lucky coincidence, dear. It helped me immeasurably, but no—that was all your own show. We disagree on many things, the Queen and I, but we are not cross-purposes on this subject. In fact, I daresay all the kami are in agreement." The Yakuza looked up at the dark rainy skies, "Isn't that right, Susano-Wo?" A loud thunderous boom seemed to answer. "Well, folks, I have many other people to see tonight. Business, y'know. So I suggest you head back to your office. Your little friend, Taro, has something for you."

The kami abruptly walked away toward the temple exit, the audience apparently over.

Yukiko whined aloud "But what about me? I thought this was going to help find my murderers. . . ."

Kazuya glanced back, "Oh, you can't help but bump into them in this affair. Remember the name Buddha's Tears. That's all I can offer for now. But, my dear yûrei, if your living friends can't stop this catastrophe, you'll have a whole lot of company."

With that, the form disappeared into the shadows.

"Well, I think our friend Taro is waiting." Sachiko cheerfully stated.

Ryoma and Yukiko both stared at Sachiko, who was already walking toward the gate, water bouncing off her dry red and white garb.

Act V

Still standing in the center of the room, Taro heard the heavy forceful steps of Ryoma come up the stairs. He paused the tape, ran over to unlock the door, only to be greeted by a red-faced Ryoma and the calm porcelain visage of Sachiko. At times he wondered if she really wasn't a traditional doll mystically come to life. How she could keep her stark white and red kimono clean in this weather intrigued him.

Realizing he had been staring, Taro cleared his throat and squeaked, "S-So what brings you here? I thought today was your day off."

"Will you ever clean this dump, Taro-kun?" Ryoma cut in. "It's *our* office too, after all."

Taro, afraid to be cut off again, as usual, looked pleadingly to Sachiko.

"I felt that we were needed here, Taro. The kami-sama have spoken their will."

Taro was a bit rattled by Sachiko's beautifully musical voice, as she rarely spoke unless something important needed to be said. Not helping was the fact that he never felt comfortable around women. Breaking his trance he uttered, "Umm, err. . . ."

"Why don't you show us what you received, Taro," she encouraged.

Taro's envy for her special gifts brought his attention to the problem at hand and his love for puzzles overcame his normal social failings.

"Well, I just got this strange parcel less than a half-hour ago. The weird thing is that I didn't hear anyone arrive or—"

Ryoma impatiently lit a Lark and looked meaningfully at Taro.

"Err, anyway, the point is that I saw a man in a tan trench coat walking away."

"Did he have a blond flat-top?" a surprised Ryoma cut in.

"Um, why yes—I think he did. Why? The spooky thing is that he disappeared into the shadows without—"

"We saw the same character at a temple about the same time about ten kilometers away," Ryoma sighed. "Just play the tape, Taro-kun."

The outline of a man's head and shoulders appeared on the screen and a digitally distorted deep voice began, "Greetings."

"Whoever did the film work knew his business. I can't see any details," Ryoma muttered.

"Shhhh!" said the other three.

The even voice of the mystery man continued. "You no doubt have many questions. Questions will have to wait until after you hear my offer."

The man on the tape coughed and cleared his throat. "As for my name and identity, they will have to remain unknown for our mutual safety. You may call me your 'benefactor.' That name is as true as any. All you need know is that my resources are vast and my motives on this matter are philanthropic and altruistic. As your sharp Professor Watanabe will no doubt quickly discover, mammoth Yotsubishi Heavy Industries, to where the contents of this parcel are traceable, is but one of my many holdings. All of which are untraceable directly to me. Yes, I know all about your little agency and your specialty in the paranormal. As you may be wondering, with all the resources at my command, why do I choose your three-member agency? It's because you are independent, and thus a wild card. The chance for your corruption is a factor of ten less than my company investigators, who may be easily compromised, revealing information to unwanted parties. Quite simply, Third Eye Agency is a sound investment on this endeavor. And I like to cover my bets."

The shadowy figure shifted its weight. "Now, the matter I speak of." There was a beep on screen as a graphic image of Japan filled the screen. "This is a map of our country. And this—" concentrations of hundreds of blue glowing dots appeared on the map "—is paranormal activity in the last fifty years. But this—" thousands of red dots superimposed over the blue ones "—this is paranormal activity in the last *five* years. Also notice that high concentrations are centered around sacred locations such as shrine and temple complexes.

"On the DVD enclosed, you will find all the specific cases on this graph investigated by Yotsubishi's Project Yûrei. They found a correlation in the data that points to a weakening in the very fabric of reality. It's been increasing exponentially. Any related correlations? The adoption of Western consumer culture by the people of Japan. Now, do not misunderstand me. That trend has made me very wealthy, but it has also led to a falling away from traditional customs. This retreat seems to have made the spirits angry, as the saying goes."

"I will pay you a sizeable remuneration to investigate the root cause of this phenomenon. And to stop it if possible. Enclosed in one vanilla folder labeled *Accounts* are three bank booklets and platinum debit cards from Sumimatchi Securities, made out in your three, *ahem*, living member names and to the Third Eye Agency Limited. You may use these accounts for anything related to the cases and to hire new personnel. That's right, I feel that despite your agency's unusual talents, you are short on manpower. I highly recommend this action to get fresh blood, as it were, into this problem. We could use the inventiveness of fresh perspectives. The new people will only be loosely affiliated with you, of course, but I would like to use your agency as a clearinghouse. I leave the hiring and firing up to you.

"The second DVD contains a database of prospective investigators and the second vanilla file contains some of my favorite resumes. Taking on new people is a non-negotiable condition of this contract. However, I've done thorough background checks on your group and I'm almost positive you'll accept my proposition to get to the bottom of this. Oh, you can use the equipment and materials at Yotsubishi Labs but I wouldn't rely on them too heavily. Their research methods lack a certain . . . flexibility.

"Also in the folders are rubbings of strange glyphs found on the walls of the underwater structures in Okinawa. They are of a script not matching any ancient variant of Chinese characters. I also included unpublished research notes from an American professor, Clark Sharpley.

"Ah yes. Another non-negotiable clause is that you must report to my chosen contacts, a Japanese-American by the name of Ken Tanaka and Professor Mari Makimi." Taro's eyes hardened at the mention of Mari. The faceless voice continued, "Unfortunately, Mr. Tanaka is in a sensitive position due to the nature of his work so he will contact you by voice and Internet only. But the exchange won't be purely one way, and they both have many interesting insights to offer you on the new investigative teams you'll hire. On the minidiscs you'll find some of their observations as well as audio anomalies recorded at investigation sites. To access them from a secure server, simply flip over the first DVD and launch the program. The Intranet software will open a secure encrypted line to Mr. Tanaka. One last thing, I trust this man, Tanaka, with my life, so likewise you should do so as well.

"Still not convinced? How about a carrot for each of you? I normally don't resort to such low tactics, but time is short and there is the off-chance your group won't be tempted by monetary promises. I will play the oni and see if I can tempt you with something a little more . . . personal.

"Ryoma, how would you like to be 'Inspector Ryoma' again? I can do it. Very easy to do, you know.

"Sachiko, how would you like to have access to Yotsubishi's Biotech labs? I'm sure, with the newest virus vector technologies, we can do something about that little problem you have with premature aging.

"Taro, naïve Taro, I can provide the evidence you need to prove your theories so you won't be laughed out of Tokyo University again by your colleagues. You will finally be published.

"And last but not least, Yukiko, I know who killed you and can help Ryoma find them.

"I can arrange for all of this, providing you follow my guidelines and carry out this very important mission. The fate of our mother country, Nippon, and her people depend on it."

At this, the tape stopped and began to rewind.

Ryoma flipped the silver lighter end over end in his hand, Sachiko wore a very solemn face, and Taro tapped the frames of his glasses, already sitting at his terminal going through the files on the DVDs. "You know, there's a lot of truth to all of this. I think we should accept—"

Ryoma cut in. "Taro, where's your common sense?" He sighed. "Forget I asked that."

Taro shot the older man a cold look. "Ryoma-san, this 'benefactor' has us over a barrel. I think that for once we should go with the flow! I mean after all that—"

"For once, I agree with Ryoma, Taro." Sachiko finally said. "What do we know about what we're getting into? From the very start we have stayed independent to carve our own path."

"Financially speaking, our Benefactor couldn't have picked a better time. According to the books our bank reserves will be gone next month due to this oh so 'reasonable' office rent." Ryoma said, smirking at Taro.

A thin female voice piped in, "I say we take on the offer, but do it our way—find our own batch of investigators."

A surprised Ryoma and Sachiko turned to Yukiko.

"What! The Benefactor mentioned me, didn't he! Don't I have a say, too!"

Ryoma groaned "Yes, dear. Now Taro, what have you got on that shiny new NEC of yours?"

Elsewhere . . .

The room was dark.

There was a crisp knock and the door quietly opened inward. A shaft of dim yellow light barely cut into the thick blanket of blackness that enveloped the room. Standing in the doorframe but not entering, was the outline of a tall lithe man in a long trench coat.

From deep in the inky interior a measured low voice intoned, "Well?"

The form in the door just stood looking into the dimensionless room. Finally, he responded,

"They took the bait. Now we only need to wait as they set our plans in motion."

A loud thump echoed as an even harder substance hit the hardwood. The same sinister voice continued,

"*My* plans, Kazuya."

A small red dot brightened on the standing man's face as he took a deep drag on his Turkish cigarette.

"Look. It doesn't matter. I'm worried about the Monk getting involved. He could really muddle our carefully planned schedule."

A long hiss emanated from the far side of the room; "Did you tell the humans the truth?"

Kazuya shifted "Well, yes. What I thought they could handle, which isn't all that much."

The dark almost vibrated, "Then that is more than adequate. In my long experience, humans will believe what they want to anyway. Let them run through our maze and set off all the traps for us. If they encounter things we haven't yet told them about, well, it'll only make them stronger for the endgame."

"The Monk worries me. He was human once and he might have sympathy for the plight of these humans. And, if he lets his inin-chib-wielding kin or the Others know what we're up to: . . ."

The room got noticeably hotter as smoldering red eyes appeared in the still void. "Leave him to me, my friend. In all of the Six Realms, the Monk is the least of my worries. He is not even high born. You deal with Amaterasu; she is of your ilk after all."

Kazuya shrugged, "Whatever you say. I'm just looking after our interests. I've got investments to watch."

The fiery eyes, hovering in space, almost seemed to smile. A grunt echoed through the abyssal darkness, "Kami, if this bears the dark fruit I plan, I dare venture you will have a whole wasteland to roam when the ancient city rises from the depths."

Kazuya narrowed his eyes and took a long drag on his cigarette but in the end kept his own council.

A hollow laughter filled the void. ☯

Scroll Three, Section Two

Gazira enjoys an evening walk in Tokyo.

SECTION TWO:

INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND POWER GROUPS IN JAPAN

Absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely.

The Imperial Household

Darkness lies one inch ahead.
—Japanese Proverb

The world's most ancient reigning imperial dynasty, Japan's imperial household *(kuhitsu)* is also the oldest recorded unbroken lineage of any family line in the world. The imperial household was already long in ruling when Japan entered recorded history. The earliest recorded evidence of the imperial family in Japan dates back to the crowning of the first emperor *(tenno)* in 660 C.E., as recorded within one of the earliest books of Japan, the *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)* in 712 C.E. However, records from the Middle Kingdom of China also independently refer to *Emperor Jimmu* of Japan ruling over a large area in the Nara-Kyoto-Osaka region, moving the imperial line further back, to 300 C.E.

There is speculation that the imperial household is over 2,600 years old but details of the imperial lineages were not written down in detail until the arrival of the Chinese writing system, kanji, in the sixth century. Two books, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki (Chronicle of Japan)*, not only establish the legitimacy of the Yamato imperial line, and place the imperial line as central to Japanese mythology, but try to prove that the emperor is a direct descendant of the chief divinity of the Shinto pantheon of kami, the sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami. The official myth goes that Amaterasu bestowed upon her grandson *Ninigi no Mikoto*, the mirror, the sword, and the jewel which became the Imperial Regalia passed in turn to each generation of descendants, the first emperor in the family line being Jimmu.

Role of the Emperor

The most unique quality of the Japanese emperors is that even in prehistory, they have performed a dual role as the secular and the religious leaders of Japan.

In all periods, the emperor has been seen by the Japanese people as the head of the national government, no matter what form that government took.

The emperor's most important capacity to the Japanese people is as the chief priest of the native Shinto religion of Japan. For many centuries, the emperor was also viewed as a living deity, a kami himself, possessing magical abilities to speak or intervene on the behalf of native kami. During various points in history, the role of religious head of the country has never wavered although the emperor's temporal power of government has often been "delegated" for others to perform. The reasoning is that as a symbol of spiritual purity, it is unbecoming for the emperor to sully himself with the daily concerns of running the government.

Rule of the Emperor

The emperor functioned in both roles of secular and religious leader until the ninth century. During this era, the government was modeled after the Tang Dynasty bureaucracy in China. From the ninth century until the twelfth, direct rule passed from the hands of the emperors into regents, the Fujiwara family, who ruled in the imperial name. In the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, there was a succession of military rulers of the country, the *shōguns*, while the emperors impotently remained in a velvet prison at the Kyoto palace. The Tokugawa Shōgunate, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, like all of the military regimes before it, respected the emperor and always sought imperial legitimarization. The Tokugawas restored the imperial institution in the process. Scholars of the age also began to emphasize the importance of the imperial line to the uniqueness of the native culture of Japan. In the nineteenth century, these concepts aided the explosive and rapid transition of Japan into a modern state. Once again the emperor was at the center of secular power, which resulted in the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The Meiji emperor and the untouchable imperial institution became the centerpiece of Japanese belief, culture, and government. However, the constitutional monarchy of 1889 still saw the emperor merely ratifying with the imperial seal of approval the policies and personnel decisions made by others.

This status lasted until 1947. With the defeat of Japan by the Allies in World War Two, there was talk of abolishing the emperor system altogether. The new constitution of 1947 retained the emperor but relegated him to the role of "the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power."

Stripped of all political power, in 1946 the emperor declared in a speech that he was human being, not a living deity. Affairs of state performed by the emperor are now only ceremonial, and formal functions first requiring the approval of the cabinet. In the media, the public image of the emperor was changed to project him as the head of the "first family" of Japan, joined with the citizens of Japan in common bonds of warmth and affection. Today more than 90% of the Japanese people support the imperial household. Critics voice concerns that as long as the imperial institution exists, there is the chance that the fascism of previous eras may resurface.

IN THE MYTHOS

Few in public circles know that the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* are in fact whitewashed and censored copies of a tome called the *Shinsen Taizoji*, the *Book of Myth*, which relates the full details of the birth of the Japanese nation and the true lineage of the Japanese imperial line. Emperor Jimmu and his descendants are indeed progeny of Amaterasu, the Mu'ian sorcerer-priestess who aided her people in a great exodus to the Japanese archipelago. Her last act as head priestess, along with her retinue of fellow sorcerers, was to transform themselves into kami.

The Imperial Regalia, Sanshu no Jingi, constructed of the metal lagh and inscribed with Naacal sigils, are enchanted relics of Mu'ian origin, used to ensure purity of genetic lineage. They are also items of great magical power, designed to protect the Japanese nation against the repetition of the tragedy of Mu.

The greatest secret of the imperial line, and other royalties of the world, is that the purity of their bloodlines preserves the genetic material of a grand experiment: to create a hybrid race of enlightened beings by combining humans and serpent people. These "children of the fallen race" are recorded in myths throughout the world. They are the nephilim.

THE ROYAL FAMILY

Current Emperor (Ten-no)

Akihito Tenno (1933–) is the 125th sovereign since Jimmu and the first to succeed to the throne under the new constitution of 1989. Eldest son of Emperor Showa, aka Emperor Hirohito (1901–1989). Upon taking the throne he adopted the formal title of *Heisei*, "Establishing Peace." The emperor is a scholar of marine biology and ichthyology.

Empress Michiko

Michiko Kogo (1934–) is wife to the emperor and the eldest daughter of the founder of Nisshin Flour Milling Co. Ltd. She is the first empress to be chosen outside the imperial family. Her marriage symbolizes that the emperor is one of the people.

Crown Prince (Hiro no Miya)

Naruhito Kotaishi (1960–) is the eldest son of the emperor. With a doctorate in history, he did advanced study at Oxford University into sea trade routes and cities of medieval Europe.

THE IMPERIAL PALACE (Kokyo)

Run by the Imperial Household Agency attached to the prime minister's office, the palace occupies 0.5 square miles of central Tokyo, surrounded by a population of twelve million Japanese. The current

THE IMPERIAL PALACE GROUNDS (AERIAL VIEW INSET AT LOWER LEFT)

palace complex, *Kyuden*, was built in 1968. The major structures are all connected by corridors around a large central courtyard.

Omote Gozashu: Emperor's office for affairs of state.

Seiden: Hall for official ceremonies.

Homeiden: Hall for entertaining guests of state.

Chowaden: Hall for evening receptions.

Fukiage Gosho: Former residence of Emperor Showa, now home to the empress dowager.

Fukiage Garden: Surrounds the imperial household agency.

East Garden: Includes the archery hall, kendo and judo hall, music department, imperial stables, and imperial guard's house.

South Garden: Adjoins the imperial palace.

Outer Garden: Only place the public is allowed in the palace grounds (and only on the first day of the year).

Kitanomaru National Garden: A magnificent public garden.

The Japanese Government

Put a lid on what smells bad.
—Japanese Proverb.

The Japanese constitution, drafted in 1946 with supervision of the Allied Occupation Forces, created a social democratic republic blending existing systems such as the British parliamentary system and the constitutional system of the United States. The constitution provides for three branches of government: a legislature, an executive, and a judiciary. The emperor, while the official head of state, wields no effective decision-making power in the affairs of the nation.

THE LEGISLATURE

The Diet is the name for this body, the Japanese parliament. The Diet is composed of a two house system: the Upper House of Representatives (511 members) and the Lower House of Councillors (252 members). Diet members are elected by popular vote. This branch is the most powerful body of the Japanese state and the only group in Japan able to make laws, treaties, draft a national budget, impeach judges, and amend the constitution. It also chooses the prime minister, usually from the most powerful political party. At least 2/3 of the house membership must be present for a vote, and most decisions are made with a straightforward majority vote.

THE EXECUTIVE

The prime minister, elected by the majority political party of the Diet, is head of the executive branch. He is also leader of the cabinet, composed of appointed ministers for each of the twelve Japanese ministries: agriculture, construction, education, finance, foreign affairs, forestry and fisheries, health and welfare, home affairs, international trade and industry, justice, labor, and transport.

When the prime minister is removed from office by a majority no-confidence vote called by the Diet, or when his term of office is concluded, a new prime minister appoints ministers to the cabinet. The prime minster may also dismiss a cabinet member at any time he feels the minister's job is not being performed properly.

THE JUDICIARY

Lower district courts, high courts, family courts, and summary courts must defer to the final rulings of the Supreme Court. The cabinet appoints judges to their positions, including the chief justice of the Supreme Court.

THE ELECTION PROCESS

The voting process is fairly egalitarian: under the new constitution, the minimum voting age is twenty years, granting women and naturalized Japanese citizens the right to vote.

Political campaigns can be quite bothersome as candidates wearing suits and white gloves vigorously wave from cars or vans equipped with blaring four-way public address systems broadcasting their platforms, pleas, promises, or looped recordings. Their eardrum-shattering levels are heard by everyone in every direction for blocks. The white gloves are thought to represent the purity of the candidates' intentions.

NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Members of the House of Representatives are elected once every four years on a prefectural level, but the term may be cut short if the cabinet decides to dissolve the House.

The House of Councillors elects half of its members every three years on a prefectural and national level. The term of an individual councillor is six years. This house can never be dissolved by any other government body.

PREFECTURAL ELECTIONS

Prefectural elections are conducted in much the same way as the national elections. The difference is that the positions at stake are prefectural governorships, council memberships, and the mayorships of cities, towns, and villages.

POLITICAL PARTIES (The 1-1/2 Party System)

In postwar Japan, only a handful of parties have survived to today. The strongest is the conservative *Jiyû Minshitô* (Liberal Democratic Party). The LDP has held a majority of seats in the government since 1955 and only in last few years has there been any sign of their grip loosening. On the political left, the *Nihon Shakaito*, the Japan Socialist Party, has been the LDP's primary opposition party but it is much weaker.

LDP disgraces such as the recruitment scandal and the Lockheed-Martin scandal in the early 1990s, as well as the election of a female president to the JSP party, cost the LDP its majorities in the houses, and it was forced into a coalition government with the JSP.

In addition to the LDP and JSP, there are a handful of smaller parties. Usually they must ally with the ruling party to fulfill any political goals. Because the prime minister is chosen by the Diet's majority party, he is always a member of the LDP and, by default, is president of the LDP party as well.

THE TODAI-BATSU (The University Clique)

Graduates of prestigious Tokyo University (Todai) are all but guaranteed positions in the upper echelons of the big three corporate keiritsu (see page 174–175), or as civil servants in the government. The majority of elected officials can attribute their fast track to the top as caused by attending Todai. Similar status also attaches to the much smaller and private Meiji University in Tokyo.

IN THE MYTHOS

Japan First Party, JFP (Saishô ni Nihon)

An ultra-right political party. Its platform is to return the nation of Japan to the global stage as an economic, political, and military superpower. For the first time since the dropping of the atom bombs, the JFP believes that Japan, not China, should be the leader of Asia; that the Japanese Yen should be the common currency of Asian markets; that the Japanese flag is a national symbol; and that Tokyo should lead by example, dispelling any doubts in the region that Japan has the welfare of Asia at heart. Created in the 1980s and based in Kyoto, the JFP was secretly formed by the new religion Buddha's Tears, supported by the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus, and funded by factions within Yotsubishi Incorporated. The Dragon Lords provide political campaign muscle. Except for the Brotherhood, none of these groups are aware of the others' involvement in the JFP. While this party rarely holds more than 5% of the seats in the houses, in last year's election it accumulated a staggering 17%, allowing JFP members to occupy important posts in the ministries. The JFP effectively plants seeds of dissension and funnels insider information to a variety of ears.

Political Puppets

Many members of the LDP and other civil servants do the bidding of the Dragon Lords and their masters as they are controlled and possessed by ethereal entities known as *astral serpents*—the disembodied spirits of Mu'ian serpent people.

AMAKUDARI ("Descending from Heaven")

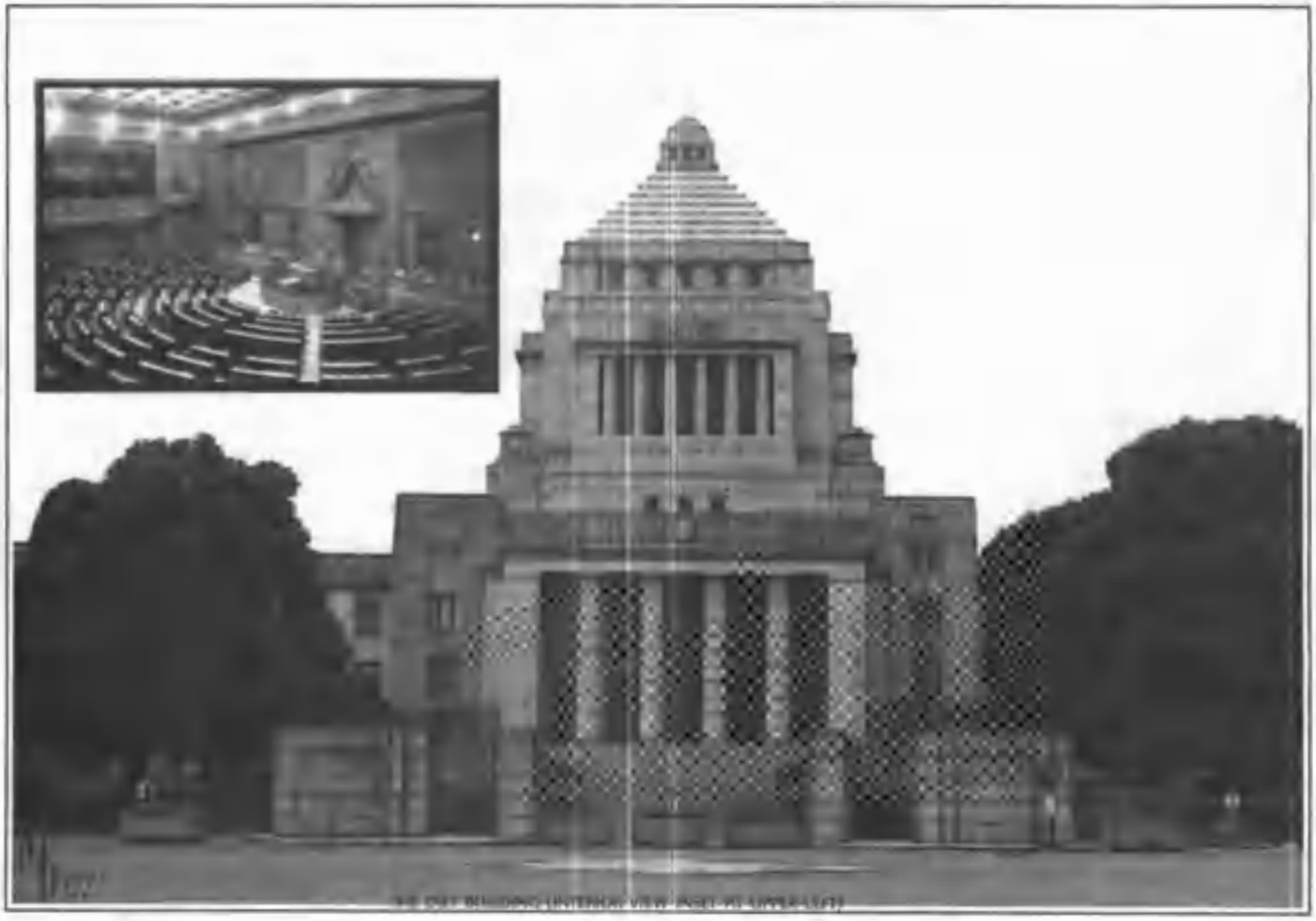
Civil servants who occupy the highest offices make a practice of accepting private sector posts after retirement; most become advisors to top-ranking Japanese corporations. This term applies even when the new position is higher paying or more prestigious than the former civil service job. Civil service workers are perceived as purer than business people who must deal with worldly issues of buying and selling. Civil servants with the best chances for *amakudari* are those who performed in an economic capacity in the public sector.

KANSON MINPI ("Officials Revered, People Scorned")

While the new constitution of 1946 specifically states that public officials are servants of the public, public officials have always seen themselves as the emperor's officials and leaders of the Japanese state. *Kanson minpi* is a derisive Confucian adage that critics apply to bureaucratic arrogance.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

The government can be seen as a number of bureaucratic hierarchies, all very Japanese in disposition, functioning in a loose sense like a clan. Each clan puts its wishes first, promoting its own members into positions of authority over other bureaucratic clans, but at the same time jealously protecting itself from encroachments in areas it considers its rightful territory.



The Self-Defense Forces (SDF)

Chapter II: Renunciation of War

Article 9

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

(2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

—Excerpt from the Japanese Constitution.

With the conclusion of World War Two and its defeat at the hands of the Allies, Japan drafted a new constitution under Allied supervision in 1947. In it one section, Article 9 (Renunciation of War), specifically prohibits the formation of a standing military force by Japan. That does not mean Japan has to stand by totally defenseless. The Japanese government's response was to coin the euphemism "self defense" *(jieitai)* for the armed forces responsible for ground, sea, and air defense of Japan.

HISTORY

Following the war, Japan's army, navy, and air force were dismantled. The onset of the Korean war quickly created a manpower shortage for the Allies. General Douglas MacArthur, then commander of the Allied occupation of Japan, ordered the creation of the National Police Reserve, numbering 75,000 men, to fill the gap. From its beginnings, it was apparent that this police force possessed greater ordinance and jurisdiction than a standard police force.

It was renamed the National Safety Forces in 1952, and the Maritime guard was combined to create the National Safety Agency. The Self-Defense Forces Law, passed in 1954, caused the organization to be renamed again to the Defense Agency, and the existing forces reorganized under the new umbrella of the Self-Defense Forces.

Today, there are three distinct divisions:

1. Ground Self-Defense Force: GSDF *(Rikujo Jieitai)*
2. Maritime Self-Defense Force: MSDF *(Kaijo Jieitai)*
3. Air Self-Defense Force; ASDF *(Koku Jieitai)*.

IN THE MYTHOS

It is rumored MacArthur actually formed the Defense Forces in the 1950s after the creature *Gaaora* rampaged unchecked along the coast of Eastern Japan for an entire week. Unable to return troops quickly enough from Korea, he formed the Defense Forces as fodder for the monster. But the beast left on its own accord, until sun solution. The SDF was charged with covering up evidence of this gigantic mutation, created by U.S. nuclear testing in the Pacific. Over the years, Gaaora has surfaced erratically from the ocean depths, causing billions of yen in damage as well as numerous deaths, all deftly covered up by press reports of earthquakes, generous "relief aid" to families of victims, and the encouragement of silence. So far, this most clever cover-up has worked hermetically within Japanese society, and Gaaora remains the country's biggest open secret—even spawning horror movies.

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE SDF

Since the SDF's formation, questioners have wondered if the very existence of the SDF is not a violation of Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan (prohibition of forming an army). The official government stance is that the constitution forbids war as a means of solving international disputes, but that it does not negate the right to self-defense. The SDF has won general acceptance from the Japanese public, and the calls for dissolution of the defense forces are dwindling, though there have also been calls for reduction in personnel and arms stocks since the end of the Cold War.

SDF BADGE

COMMAND STRUCTURE

1. The supreme commander is the prime minister, head of the cabinet in the Diet.
2. The director general of the Defense Agency, a cabinet member, receives orders from the prime minister.
3. The Joint Staff Council and military personnel assist.
4. The chiefs of staff of the three forces carry out direct orders from the director-general and supervise activities within their branches.
5. The chairman of the Joint Staff Council assumes command in wartime. In peacetime, his powers are limited to overall defense planning.

PERSONNEL

Enlisted

Military service is not mandatory in Japan. SDF enlisted personnel are typically ages 18 to 25, serving a voluntary term of 2 to 3 years. The SDF maintains a volunteer reserve corps on inactive status and has actively recruited women since 1974.

Officers

SDF officers are selected from candidates of the National Defense Academy; they are often graduates of universities who then pass a qualifying examination for the NDA. Non-commissioned officers are promoted to full officer if they can score high on qualifying examinations. Each service has its own candidate school, but there is also a National Institute for Defense Studies for the cream of the crop desiring further study.

SELF-DEFENSE FORCES RANKS

English	Japanese
General	Taisho
Lieutenant General	Chuujou
Major General	Shouhu
Colonel	Taisa
Lieutenant Colonel	Nisa
Major	Shosa
Captain	Tai-i
First Lieutenant	Chui
Second Lieutenant	Shoi
Warrant Officer	Junshikan
Sergeant Major	Souchou
Master Sergeant	Issou
Sergeant First Class	Nisou
Sergeant	Gunso
Leading Private	Gocho
Private First Class	Ishhi
Private	Heisotsu
Recruit	Shinpei

THE DEFENSE BUDGET

Annually, the SDF budget is just under 1.0% of the gross national product. Regulations restrict the SDF to a 1.0% GNP funding cap, equal today to 6% of the national budget or in money around 5.2 trillion Yen ($49 billion U.S.). Overall, 40 % of the budget pays for personnel and 60% goes toward equipment, training, bases, research and development, etc.

UNITS AND DEPLOYMENT

Ground Defense Forces

The GSDF has twelve basic infantry divisions placed regionally in peacetime, and one armored division grouped into five regional brigades (artillery, airborne, training, helicopter and armored). Emphasis is on the defense of Hokkaido from mainland Asia. The GSDF has around 150,000 personnel with 1,500 medium tanks of Japanese design, as well as 400 Japanese-produced helicopters licensed via U.S. companies.

Marine Defense Forces

The MSDF maintains a fleet of ten district units. Anti-submarine warfare is the MSDF's tactical focus, with four mobile surface-ship-escort flotillas. The MSDF has around 50,000 personnel with 60 anti-sub destroyers and destroyer escorts, and 18 non-nuclear submarines, filled out by over 240 anti-submarine or anti-aircraft ships and helicopters.

Air Defense Forces

The ASDF is divided into four air zones with ten squadrons of interceptor units. The Air Defense concentrates on rapid identification of aircraft encroaching Japanese airspace and quick response to an organized air attack. The ASDF has around 50,000 personnel, 460 aircraft (mostly F-15's and F-4's produced in Japan and licensed through U.S. companies), as well as Patriot and Nike surface-to-air missiles also produced under license.

SUSHI FOR THOUGHT

To this day, the existence of the SDF is controversial in many corners of Japanese society. Hard-liners continue to call for abolition of the existing constitution because it was drafted under the duress of the Allied occupation. Drafting the old constitution would also eliminate restrictions on armed forces. Most telling is that the SDF remains an agency rather than a full ministry, and thus is limited in any political aspirations and hampered from expansion.

For these reasons, the post of director-general is not a position that can pathway to promotion to higher government office. Japan's international neighbors would object vigorously were the SDF to increase its present strength. Many still live who remember the brutality of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy during WWII.

For the time being, Japan still is protected under the umbrella of U.S. forces stationed in Okinawa. The SDF is tightly integrated with the U.S. military, though the horrors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima make the inclusion of nuclear weapons or nuclear-powered ships in the SDF ran damaging to the SDF's reputation.

The National Police Force (NPF)

Whatever you do in Japan, do not be foolish enough get arrested. I sat day after day in a "bird cage." What's a bird cage? Imagine no privacy, bars on all four walls, allowed no sleep, even forced to go to the bathroom under the watchful gaze of your interrogators. By the end of my detention, I confessed to whatever they wanted. It didn't matter I wasn't even in the country at the time. I was exhausted and broken.

—Anonymous Foreigner.

At 220,000 strong, the National Police Force is organized on a prefectural level and coordinated by the National Police Agency headquarters in Tokyo.

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

The Allied occupation of 1945 to 1952 caused the drafting of a new Police Law which eliminated the traditional duties of fire fighting, public health, issuance of ordinances, judging minor offenses, and administrative duties previously performed by the Japanese police. Instead, police duties were fashioned to mirror those of Western countries. The new system was also decentralized, with 1,800 independent municipal police forces instituted in all population centers over 5,000 people. In addition, the Prefectural Rural Police Force serves outlying areas. Checks on powers of the police forces were ensured by public safety commissions of elected civilians.

This attempt at decentralization was unsuccessful, and in 1951, the Police Law was modified, allowing small communities to merge with the National Rural Force: 80% of the communities did so. The police system was quickly centralized in 1954, with the New Police Law passed immediately after the Allied forces departed.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

The National Police Agency

Police officers, organized in prefectural units, are able to exercise autonomy in daily affairs but are answerable to the central National Police Agency. The NPA supervises education, training programs, equipment procurement, crime statistics compilation, criminal identification services, and coordination of inter-prefectural relations.

The Prefectural Headquarters

Prefectural police headquarters supervise everyday police operations. Prefectural HQs deploy beat patrol officers, traffic control officers, criminal investigators, and staff. However, domestic security units are controlled and employed directly by the Japanese government, and this includes senior national and senior prefectural police officials.

District Police Stations

Divided into over 1,350 district police stations nationwide, each is under control of its prefectural police headquarters. Notably, the district police stations do not have to answer directly to the town or city government they are located in.

Koban and Chuzaisho

Each district is further divided into *koban*, police boxes, and rural *chuzaisho*, single-family residential police boxes. These small buildings act as information centers and enable subtle surveillance of citizens. Koban are ubiquitous on the Japanese landscape.

KOBAN

Personnel

Omawari-San

Uniformed patrol officers, *omawari-san*, account for about 40% of NPF personnel and man the extensive network of police boxes and patrol cars across the country. Unspecialized officers, they are first on the scene of a crime or incident and, if necessary, can refer the case to a specialized unit for further investigation. Patrol officers work hard to form a rapport with the households in their jurisdiction, often going door-to-door twice a year to introduce themselves, gather suggestions, pass on information for crime prevention, and hear complaints. In rural communities, the police officer and his family become a vital part of the village or town. In the interest of preventing corruption or favoritism, patrol officers and even staff in police headquarters are regularly rotated to new posts every 1–4 years. Men and women alike have been employed in the capacity of effective uniformed officers for decades.

Special Officers and Task Forces

All specialized officers (such as administrators, criminal investigators, those in crime prevention and traffic duty, etc.) begin their careers as omawari-san before being promoted. Even in the NPF, paying your dues is expected. Criminal investigators, in addition to crimes, also look into fires and industrial accidents. Crime prevention police monitor juveniles, bars, pachinko parlors, mah-jong parlors, the enforcement of special laws regarding gun and sword ownership, drugs, smuggling, prostitution, pornography, and industrial pollution.

CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

Arrest and Detention

The Code of Criminal Procedure allows detention of suspects for up to 23 days without formal charges. During detention, suspects are not permitted free state legal council though they may hire their own. Police often use the code to restrict visitation to the suspect, including lawyers.

Interrogation

Long-term detention and built-in societal conditioning combine to allow the police to secure a confession or even multiple confessions from a suspect. There is, however, no formal guilty plea in the court system.

Trial and Imprisonment

In 99.9% of cases which go to trial, a full conviction is the result, most all of which are supported by a confession by the suspect. However, prosecutors must be very discreet as a case can be dropped due to improper procedures, lack of evidence, or even issues unrelated to reasonable doubt of guilt. Defense lawyers, usually faced with confessions by their clients, often aim for suspension of prosecution rather than objecting to guilt.

Capital Punishment

About ten death sentences per year are executed in secrecy via hanging, but only after lengthy appeals. Relatives are informed of the death sentence after the hanging.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The responsibilities of police remain expansive, but they are considerably more restricted than in prewar Japan. Public safety commissions usually defer to police decisions and are ineffective in checking police excesses; public opinion has proven more effective in this function. The life of a police officer is demanding and strict; police culture is tight-knit and hierarchy-based. It is felt vital to preserve the police's reputation in the community.

Although public opinion rewards the police is favorable, they are, in a sense, a holdover from pre-war authoritarianism; not postwar egalitarianism. Contact with the community is maintained by koban police visiting homes. Neighborhood crime prevention and traffic safety associations also increase the rapport between community and police. Despite underlying tensions, it can be said that the police in Japan enjoy general community support and respect.

SUSHI FOR THOUGHT

Careful to maintain good relations with the public, Japanese police hold themselves to a high standard and do not generally allow outside observers during field work. There have been several embarrassing scandals recently but the NPF still manages to maintain an efficient arrest and conviction rate. This might be attributed to the societal emphasis on cooperation with authority figures and true regret expressed by the guilty party. These factors greatly aid in the capture of criminals, because they know they will be caught and treated justly.

Keiritsu/Zaibatsu

keiritsu: 1. group of companies linked, connected to or affiliated with a central bank and trading company that acts as an intelligence gathering link to the outside world. 2. Japanese corporate style: a family interlinked vertically and horizontally, enabling control of every aspect of economics, industry, resources, and services.

Following the Tokugawa Period, the new Japanese government knew that the only way to catch up with the West technologically and culturally was by a massive jump start to industry and commerce. Thus the formation of *zaibatsu*, money cliques or cartels, was encouraged and four large zaibatsu quickly grew to dominate the scene—Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Sumitomo, and Yasuda. With governmental blessing and support, these business cooperatives controlled key portions of the economy, including steel production, exports, and banking as well as numerous other sectors, all coordinated by a holding company with financial ties to all the individual companies in the zaibatsu conglomerate. The zaibatsus worked too well: After WWII, the Allied occupation forces decided that these powerful monopolies must be broken up, for they had fueled the war machine. Zaibatsu were dissolved, anti-trust laws passed, and company presidents fired.

Keiritsu

This state did not last long. The Korean War in 1950 made it apparent that a strong Japan, not a broken one, was needed as an ally. With Allied approval, the old companies of the zaibatsus (as well as new ones) made financial links directly to banks rather than through a holding company. These restructured conglomerates were renamed *keiritsu*.

There are different types of keiritsu. *Horizontally* structured keiritsu have links across many kinds of industries, forming a pyramidal structure sharing technology and research and development, as well as loans. Only one company is represented in each key sector to avoid internal competition. Mitsui, Mitsubishi and Sumitomo, all former zaibatsu, fall into this category of keiritsu.

Vertically organized distribution keiritsu control products and their prices from the factory, including parts subcontractors, to the showroom. Such vertical keiritsu are not as powerful and are often part of a larger horizontal keiritsu. The strength of vertical keiritsu is that they allow the cartel to absorb losses and use price gouging to keep out foreign corporations. Japanese have faith in these interlocking keiritsu: they allow lifetime employment, low national unemployment rates, and ensure the economic security of Japan by the diffusion of losses into an entire infrastructure rather than just one company. Shoulder to shoulder like samurai of old, they band together to fight a techno-economic war against outside companies.

THE BIG THREE KEIRITSU

Sumitomo Group: This former zaibatsu has roots in House of Sumitomo *(Sumitomo-ke)*. Based in Kyoto, it was a major Tokugawa merchant clan, or *shoka*, which for centuries was the center of the copper industry. Since the 1950s the group no longer has a central controlling family but is now directly linked to Sumitomo Bank Ltd., which funds over twenty companies including Sumitomo Electric Industries Ltd., Sumitomo Chemical Company Ltd., and Sumitomo Heavy Industries. Presidents meet in the "White Wednesday Club" for strategy sessions.

Mitsubishi Group: Based upon a government shipping company in 1873, it grew into Japan's largest ship builder. Becoming a major military contractor during the wars, and infamous for manufacturing the "Zero" fighter plane, the group was one of the first zaibatsu targeted for dissolution by the victorious Allies. Today's Mitsubishi keiritsu centers around policy coordination meetings in the "Friday Club" by company presidents of a dozen multi-national firms headquartered in Tokyo, with a total of 200,000 employees. Mitsubishi Corporation is Japan's largest import-export trading group and Mitsubishi Motors Co. is a highly successful automaker. All financing is done by Mitsubishi Bank Ltd.

Mitsui Group: Founded in 1673, it was famous as the largest merchant house of Tokugawa Japan. Mitsui specialized in textiles, and it came to be the largest zaibatsu of Japan by the end of WWII. Dissolved by the Allies, the new keiritsu was linked to Mitsui Bank Ltd., the first private bank in Japan. The Mitsui group today is several

IN THE MYTHOS

"From noodles to fusion power!!"

Yotsubishi Group: This former zaibatsu originated in the Tokugawa Period from a group of four samurai families who were charged with protecting the emperor. Marrying into merchant families in the Meiji Era, they formed Yotsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. Numbering over 200 companies by the end of WWII, considerable funding was invested in R&D resulting in experimental craft such as jets, subs, medical chemicals and machinery used in Unit 731, and possibly even an atom bomb. Dissolved by the Allies, the group reformed in the 1950s around Yotsubishi Bank. With some thirty-five companies and 150,000 employees Yotsubishi favors military contracts and manufactures nuclear power plants, aircraft, semiconductors, computers, energy, ships, pharmaceuticals, robotics, medical equipment, electronics, generators, and telecommunications. (Project Yitzo and Psi-Mech are both buildings of the Yotsubishi Group; see pages 193–195.) Since 1992, the Yotsubishi Group has also formed a holding company, Yotsubishi Holdings Ltd., where presidents meet for strategy planning on "Black Monday." There, on the top floor of the sixty-story Yotsubishi Tower, they also discuss returning to a zaibatsu structure.

The corporate soldier is the salaryman. Most living in company dorms, they each go to work with a brown briefcase, regulation half cut, and black suit sporting a company lapel pin. Yotsubishi's corporate pin is four silver blades forming an "X" on a black circle.

Friendship, Solidarity, Allegiance

YOTSUBISHI CORPORATE LOGO

dozen firms in petrochemicals, commerce, construction, engineering, food, machinery, mining, real estate and other enterprises. The central hub of the group is Mitsui and Company Ltd., one of the largest trading companies in Japan.

CORPORATE RECRUITMENT (Saiyo)

Large corporations still practice life-employment, recruiting new employees in April of each year directly from the highest ranked universities in Japan such as Todai. From this perspective, it can be understood why these institutions place so much emphasis on entrance exams. Hiring these "young bamboo shoots," companies expect loyalty and dedication to the firm. In return, they promise on-the-job training, life employment, and promotion. Of late there is a trend toward employees leaving companies to look for better jobs; such people are rarely hired by keiritsu, for they are viewed as disloyal.

CORPORATE DECISION MAKING (Ishi Kettai)

Using the ringi system, corporations make decisions based upon circulation of inter-office memos. The top tiers decide management policy but actual solutions are farmed out to individual departments. Middle tiers or department heads gain consensus in their group and return to the top tiers with written proposals.

CORPORATE CULTURE (Kigyo Bunka)

The closely-knit hierarchal structure of the Tokugawa merchant houses as well as old governmental structures influence the keiritsu to this day. Marriages between employees within keiritsu are encouraged, as are other types of interdependent bonds such as doing all banking and personal business at the keiritsu's bank and company store. Group spirit is strongly encouraged by Japanese corporations.

CORPORATE IDEOLOGY

An official corporate song, testimonials by company presidents, company-sponsored celebrations, and public open-houses all serve to express the primary goals and values of the business. The president is the head of a big family where harmony, cooperation, and determination by the children all bring growth and prosperity to the corporation and, in the bigger picture, to all of Japan.

Most new Japanese employees make no objection when a company tries to shape them into ideal employees, adjusting their values and ethics to fit the corporation's style. Considered a valid concern for the company, a new employee's attitude and character is subjected to intense training programs, such as zen meditation retreats, to reinforce company values.

Relationships with employees extend beyond the workplace: a good boss is expected to give personal advice and socialize during leisure hours. Repetitive routines also enforce company ethics—such as the morning stretch, singing the company song, and the morning group meeting. The general tendency of most Japanese is to defer to the group, which also aids the continual reinforcement of company ideology.

SENIORITY SYSTEM (Nenko Joretsu)

Japanese companies still use a seniority system for promotions, salary, and responsibility based upon the length of service by an individual. This guarantees life employment and a sizable pension even if pay is low, but unproductive workers do put a strain on the system as others must carry them. This system is slowly breaking down as Japan's economic fortunes change.

RECENT TRENDS: ZAIBATSU AGAIN?

In 1992, Japan abolished the law prohibiting formation of zaibatsu. Mitsui was first to respond by creating the Mitsui Holding Company. Does this mean that the keiritsu will shed their sheep's clothing?

Education

Learning is the cornerstone of Asian civilization, for in wisdom comes power to change the world.

Before the need to write Chinese characters, called kanji in Japan, education generally used oral tradition to transmit history and customs. With the introduction of kanji in the sixth century, a need arose for systematic scholarship. Conventional education, in the sense of reading and writing, along with Confucian thought and Buddhist philosophy were instituted in the Nara era (710–794 C.E.) for the ruling elite. Buddhist priests acted as the first teachers. Temples became centers of learning. By the Meiji Restoration of 1868, literacy of the population was surprisingly high due this education system. Patriotism and the national directive of modernization were the main influences on education in the nineteenth century. By the 1930s, nationalism dominated school policies, feeding militarization and the war machine. Postwar saw decentralization of the schools.

JAPANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM (Kyôikushi)

Decentralization did not last. The Ministry of Education was created in the 1950s, centralizing and standardizing the school system within all school districts. One goal of modern Japanese education is to give each child an equal opportunity for education. This means that every aspect of education must be standardized, right down to insuring that each and every classroom in the nation has exactly the same maps on the walls and that schools use the curriculum-required text books countrywide. Deviation from course materials is strongly discouraged. Students slower or faster than the average suffer. However, all are insured a fair chance at education (and 35% of high school graduates continue on to university).

Homogeneity of Japan in terms of status, wealth, and race makes it a crucial goal of a student's education to earn academic credentials, which helps establish his or her social status in the community. Prestigious schools have extremely difficult entrance exams.

HIGH SCHOOL

Admittance into such a school guarantees, with hard work, passage into a higher ranking school at the next grade level and eventually, a prestigious career in the private or government sectors.

Organization: In structure, the Japanese system emulates the United States, with nine years of compulsory school (elementary and junior high) and four years of high school. School administration is modeled after French education. Each school is administered by a local or regional board of education under supervision by the Ministry of Education.

Designations: Each grade is given a year designation, each class a number. These designations are on all student name badges. So first grade, first class is 1-1; sixth grade, third class is 6-3. Junior high starts over, so seventh grade is 1-3, eighth grade is 2-3, and so on. High school restarts the number designations again.

TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATION

In the teacher's office, all teachers maintain unpartitioned desks, each able to see the other. Depending upon school size, there can be 10–50 teachers *(sensei)* on staff in addition to a school nurse, gardener, and clerk. The principal *(kōchō-sensei)* maintains a spacious separate office where he greets guests and sips tea. The vice-principal *(kyōtō-sensei)* is treated more as a faculty leader and peer by teachers.

CURRICULUM: THE SUBJECTS

Everyday core curriculum classes are mathematics, science, Japanese, social studies, English, homeroom, and moral education.

Twice a week students also study physical education, art, music, home economics, and shop.

A teacher does not teach in an assigned subject room. Instead, students stay in their homeroom and it is the teacher who arrives to teach a subject. Each class of forty students is in a fixed homeroom, and they stay together all day. The homeroom teacher has a parental role, looking after the children, acting as a councilor, eating lunch with them, and contacting parents when problems arise. While students receive report cards, they are not graded but their scores are measured against the average for the class. Failing students are passed to the next grade level, not held back.

LEVELS OF EDUCATION

Elementary School (shō-gakō) — Grades 1–6

Some say children bloom like flowers in Japanese elementary schools. Arguably the best in the world, patient teachers encourage creativity and self discipline. About half of the schools require uniforms. Except in Tokyo districts, there are generally no exams for junior high entrance.

Junior High School (chū-gakō) — Grades 7–9

The flower closes; things change drastically in junior high, as standard uniforms are instituted and the course regimen becomes gruelling. Teachers are strict and demanding. Students attend night *juku* in order to pass ulcer-inducing high school entrance exams.

High School (kō kō) — Grades 10–12

In high school the flower withers. Stress becomes epidemic. Some students commit suicide. Others bully anybody the least bit different. Hours spent at juku are daily and longer, to promote rote memorization to better digest the massive volumes of facts decisive in the university exam.

Juku—Cram Schools (yobiko) — All Grades

Cram schools are private schools specifically geared to passing the competitive entrance exams. While not mandatory, most students attend, especially those who have failed tests the first time around.

THE SCHOOL DAY

School is held Monday through Friday and two Saturdays a month. The Ministry of Education staggers starting times for school: the school day starts at 7 A.M. for elementary, 8 A.M. for junior high, and 9 A.M. for high school. Students go to homeroom for announcements over the P.A. system while teachers conduct the morning staff meeting.

HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Each period is fifty minutes, with ten minutes between. Lunch *(hiru-gohan)* is at noon with the students eating in their homeroom for thirty minutes, followed by a recess of twenty minutes and cleaning time *(sōji)* of fifteen minutes where the whole school mobilizes and everyone pitches in to clean.

The remaining three periods end the day. Some students go home, others go to sports clubs while the rest trudge to cram school for another 3–6 hours of classes. Juku students get home after 10 P.M. to arrive the next day and do it all over again.

CLUBS

Students also have the option of participating in various after school clubs (though "optional" is used loosely here) such as sports (kendo, judo, baseball, soccer, volleyball, track), band, computer, pen pals, taikō drums, traditional dance, volunteer and the like.

SCHOOL LIFE—SOME ANNUAL EVENTS

Sports Day (spring): Students practice for weeks to march in military formation and form into squads to compete in relays and obstacle courses.

Graduation Ceremony: The entire school assembles (400+) in the gymnasium, in uniforms, with boys and girls separated. The principal, the head of the PTA and the head of the board of education make long winded speeches, then each student gets a scroll.

Class Field Trip: Students divide into grades and then walk 1–3 miles to a local park where they get to play sports, eat lunch, and hang out.

STUDENT UNIFORMS

With strict dress codes, students are required to wear almost the same uniform nationwide; they are even required by school code to wear it off campus. Uniforms are black button-up for boys, with variations on sailor suits for girls. A backpack, name badge, and utility bicycle are also standard issue.

PROBLEMS WITH THE SYSTEM

Critics contend that standardization has resulted in crowded class rooms of forty students who are discouraged from critical and creative

thinking in favor of rote memorization of facts and figures, all to pass the daunting entrance exams for university.

Harsher critics posit that education does not teach facts but indoctrinates Japanese children into being Japanese, learning the group ethic, fitting in, obeying rules, and showing respect for authority. In recent years, students on sensory overload from Western consumer culture are rebelling, with increasing incidents of violence against teachers and other students. Some feel that the competition for entrance exams has become excessive but no solution presents itself.

Bullying also remains a persistent and prominent problem, compounded in many cases when teachers look away or even condone the behavior. Bullying arises from the old adage "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down" taken to the extreme. A student who is smarter, slower, or who merely has gone abroad for a few weeks is bullied. This reaches such extremes that some students have been murdered or have committed suicide. Less seriously but also troubling is the social development of students; boys and girls do not socialize and are divided by genders for all activities. It is not until university that youths begin dating.

STUDENT UNIFORMS

The Yakuza (Bôryokudan)

bôryokudan: 1. violence groups; 2. organization with a sizable percentage of membership having a criminal record; 3. organizations with extremely violent or criminal tendencies.

"Yakuza," a useless card hand of 8-9-3 when playing *hanafuda*, a gambling game of Tokugawa era Japan. Yakuza also became the name for the willful dregs and useless misfits of society who banded together to become a Japanese criminal syndicate. Called *bôryokudan* by the police, they are highly organized gangs who proudly adhere to the chivalrous way of the warrior, Bushidô. These "violence groups" have maintained a strong presence in Japan since organizing over three hundred years ago. Yakuza have long maintained the image of noble gangsters who protect weak villagers from a heavy-handed government.

History

The birth of the Yakuza can be traced back to the 1700s with three groups: the *bakuto* and *tekiya*, and later the *gurentai*. The one thing all these groups had in common was that they were poor, landless, and troublemakers. The bakuto were traditional gamblers hired by the Tokugawa government to win back wages from workers. They quickly gained the epithet of *ya-ku-sa*, or useless. The bakuto prowled highways and towns, but did not interfere with other shadowy groups.

YUBITSUME AND TATTOOS

Originating with the bakuto, the custom of finger cutting, *yubitsume*, was later adopted as a junior member's act of contrition to a crime boss for any act performed against the group. If the gangster continued to screw up, the finger's next joint or the top of the next finger was severed just before the member was ostracized. The bakuto also originated the custom of tattooing. Originally an additional punishment, it evolved into a mark of toughness with the tattoos becoming increasingly larger and more elaborate.

THE TEKIYA

The tekiya were street peddlers who worked markets and fairs, possibly descending from con-men and purveyors of cure-all medicines. The tekiya joined together to protect themselves from Tokugawa rule, controlling booths at markets where they overcharged for poor items and then lied about the quality or quantity. The tekiyas' organization would become the structure for the Yakuza.

THE GURENTAI

During the Allied occupation years, there existed a power vacuum. This group was in many ways like the Western Mob. They specialized in the black market, and expanded into protection rackets. Emulating their Western cousins, they became the modern Yakuza. Bloody and violent, they favored guns instead of swords and attacked ordinary citizens instead of businesses.

Yakuza Structure

The Yakuza follow the traditional clan structure of families and houses. Within the clan, also called a *gumi*, there is the vertical oyabun-kobun relationship of father and child. The oyabun resembles a father providing advice, protection, and aid. In return, the kobun is expected to provide loyalty and to follow his duty when called upon. Induction into the Yakuza is solemn, borrowing heavily from the Shinto faith: cups of sake rice wine, a sacred liquid to the gods, are exchanged and sipped before a Shinto shrine to symbolize the binding affirmation in all witnesses of the oyabun-kobun bond.

MODEL GUMI ORGANIZATION

Kumicho: Supreme commander. The head of a clan and the oyabun who runs the clan headquarters.

Saiko Komon: Senior advisor, below the kumicho. Might run 12 or more sub-gangs (500 members) as personal guards.

Wakagashira: Number Two Man. Commands 50 or more gangs (1,000 members).

Shateigashira: Number Three Man. Commands 10 or more gangs (250 members).

Fuku-Honbucho: Assistant. 6 gangs (150 members).

Shatei: Senior bosses, over 100 in the clan.

Wakushu: Junior bosses. With the aid of their shatei, they run 1,000 gangs with a total membership of 30,000 in a clan.

Government and Yakuza

While the Yakuza is more tolerated than organized crime groups in other countries, the official government position is clear. The passage in 1992 of the Act for Prevention of Unlawful Activities by Bôryokudan, is a catch-all law designed to enable prosecution of extortion by Yakuza not previously covered by earlier laws.

YAKUZA IN BUSINESS AND POLITICS

The Yakuza have always had their fingers in business, involved in as many lucrative legal operations as illegal ones. They often use legitimate businesses as fronts to cover bôryokudan operations, even using tactics such as openly registering a gumi as a business or a religious organization.

A gumi might control 3000 or more businesses, sports clubs, and entertainment establishments such as pachinko and mah-jong parlors, all used as a cover for elaborate gambling, loan-sharking, narcotics (methamphetamines, *shabu*), smuggling, and pornography rackets. Businesses also cover common Yakuza practices of rigging baseball games, horse races, and boat races. In the 1980s during the bubble economy, gang members regularly used strong-arm tactics with *jugeyu*, who seized real estate, municipal hospitals, and even language schools. Today Yakuza maintain strong control over real estate companies. Another tactic by a *sôkaiya* is to buy a chair for a large corporation and then threaten to interrupt the yearly shareholder's meeting, usually receiving bribes just to stay away. These operations, legal and illegal, can net 500 billion yen a year. In politics, campaign donations and protesters have disgraced more than one politician when Yakuza involvement has come to light.

SUSHI FOR THOUGHT

The Underworld Structure

Yakuza: Oyabun and kobun, stay spotless.

Bosozoku: Motorcycle gangs, wear white hoods.

Gangs: Do the dirty work for Yakuza.

Punks: Wanna-be's who try out for gangs.

Foreign Mafia: Koreans; Chinese Tongs, Southeastern Triads.

Yamaguchi-Gumi

The largest clan of the Yakuza, the Yamaguchi-gumi, dates back to 1915. It maintains a public headquarters in Kôbe with 30,000 members and grosses $3 billion U.S. yearly.

Tokyo Ice

Tokyo is considered the Ice Capital; that is, the largest consumer of crystal meth in the world.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE YAKUZA

The Yakuza maintain a high profile in Japan. They are very open about their activities, having offices and even business cards. They see themselves as patriotic citizens and even aid the aims of ultra-right political groups. However, when serious incidents rouse citizens, such as the stabbing of a movie producer, the Yakuza are no longer seen as Robin Hoods. They can be openly opposed by neighborhood groups who act as the eyes and ears for police, quickly reporting suspected Yakuza activity. Sometimes this results in brutal retaliations such as stabbings and property damage, but police sweep in to arrest most gang members. Nonetheless, the dislike of real gangsters hasn't stopped Yakuza from being the second most popular subject (after samurai) for novels, movies, plays, and manga.

Like other social groups in Japan, young Yakuza adopt a distinctive look: during the 1980s it was punch perms, Elvis pompadours, and shades. Today, the style for a Yakuza foot soldier is a dark suit, crew cut, sunglasses, and a hint of tattoos. Higher-ups often drive shiny black imported cars such as Mercedes or BMWs.

YAKUZA EXPORTS: THE FUTURE

With the crackdown on the Yakuza at home, things look bad for the future. The only answer might be super-syndicates all joining into a national-level syndicate with a corporate structure. Expansion might also be another avenue: Since the 1970s, the gumi have established toeholds in the countries of Europe and Asia; most notable is a stronghold in the United States along the West Coast and in Hawaii. Investing $20 billion a year from legal ventures by posing as Japanese investors, the Yakuza now compete with the Hong Kong Triads for California turf. Meanwhile the FBI is busy with militant groups much less organized and much more visible. Yakuza have also been reported engaged in activities in Australia, Brazil, Italy, and even the United Kingdom.

Cthulhu Sushi: Sign of the Times — by Jason Chan

Scroll Three, Section Three

Employees of Yotsubishi's Project Yûrei. From left to right: Field Agent Rumiko Takahashi, Mister Kuro, a captive yûrei, Professor Mari Makoto (Psi-Mech Division), Rei, Field Agent Reiji Matsumoto.

SECTION THREE:

CULTS AND SECRET SOCIETIES

Wherein various organizations are investigated for the benefit of humanity.

* YOTSUBISHI SECURITIES INTERNAL DOCUMENT *

* PROJECT YÛREI WHITE PAPER *

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

BY ACTING YSI DIRECTOR TANAKA ICHIRO

In the course of Project Yûrei's long experimentation into the largely untapped realm of ectoplasmetrics, opposition was met time and again in the field by certain heretofore-unknown organizations. More often than not, YSI agents and these mysterious but well-informed groups were at cross-purposes. It would seem that our organization and these unknown elements often seek the same goals and acquisitions. Whether this represents direct competition, or the intentional blocking of our research, or just incredible coincidence is still hotly debated within the Project. That notwithstanding, several shadowy encounters have already have ended in the loss of valued field agents, often in a grisly manner. It was decided that research into these groups merited the highest priority. To that end, YSI appropriated black funds and has through intra-departmental approval formed a sub-division within Project Yûrei specifically for collecting intelligence and cataloging background data on these dangerous and unpredictable groups. Unlike our staff, they are not bound by scientific ethics or principles. Without a doubt, these human antagonists present the single greatest threat in the physical world to YSI. We urge that investigators who encounter these unknowns in the field exercise the utmost caution and foresight in dealing with them. After run-ins, the most practical solution is to anonymously call officials of the National Police and allow them to clean up the mess.

Since data is by no means complete, we continue to circulate this internal document. If any employee of Yotsubishi has first-hand or incidental friend-of-a-friend information, you are urged to submit it via the discreet anonymous channels we have provided. For further information, please contact Doctor Erika Yamamoto at 03-894-243-1257.

Acting Director
Yotsubishi Securities International
Tanaka Ichiro

Buddha's Tears

(Butsu no Namida)

And finally, dear disciples, let not my teachings fall into the hands of those without balanced minds for I fear that the plain truth as the cure of universal enlightenment could be mankind's undoing in all *realities.*

—Poisoned Lord Buddha on his deathbed to his followers, *Forbidden Sutra.*

Aliases: Forbidden Brotherhood, *Butsu no Baka* (Crazy Buddhas).

Organization Type: Registered tax-free "new religion" with the Japanese Ministry of Finance (MOF)

Estimated Membership: 1 leader, 56 high elite, 2,744 elite, 19,600 rank-and-file, plus an additional 137,200 peripheral members in branches worldwide. Within the elite ranks are a small army of professional businessmen, chemists, biologists, other scientists, and computer technicians from all walks of life.

Threat Assessment: Extreme danger. Members practice ritual sacrifice and perform terrorist activities.

Holdings and Interests: Cult land holdings include a private island compound near Okinawa's Ryukyu islands; a converted health spa complex for the headquarters in Kyoto; community centers in the major metropolis centers of Japan in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo. Cult branch installations are found near Las Vegas, Nevada, USA; St. Petersburg, Russia; Katmandu, Nepal; and New Delhi, India. Corporate interests include a 60% controlling interest in Noriumo Pharmaceuticals; full ownership of Yoshiwa BioTech International; a 20% investment in BC Press (the cult's private publisher); member-of-the-board status in New Media—a computer and video publishing company; and a private yacht.

Capital Assets: Over two trillion yen ($1.3 billion US).

Headquarters: The headquarters of Butsu no Namida is located north of the old religious capital of Kyoto, nestled within a secluded mountainside. Of geological interest is that the compound is located over a region where three major continental tectonic plates intersect. The facility can comfortably house four hundred cultists at any time and often is populated at half capacity with attending members who are usually going through some level of training or initiation into the deeper mysteries of the cult.

Known History: Butsu no Namida was registered as a new religion in the early 1960s and since that time has shown phenomenal growth. Speculation abounds that much of the money and wealth the cult exhibits is acquired through underworld ties, but repeated investigations by authorities have yielded only tight-lipped cultists and dead ends. Others suggest that the wealth was already in the possession of the cult leader, Asahara Shinyama, who is the lineal descendent of a seventeenth century Edo aristocrat, and is using the cult's holdings to merely multiply his already great wealth. In more conservative districts of Japan, several cult-related incidents have gained the attention of the local police but sufficient evidence to warrant a full raid has never been gathered.

Legal investigations always seem to point to rogue cultists acting independently of the greater, benevolent "new religion." In metropolitan communities, Butsu no Namida has an excellent reputation, establishing rehabilitation programs, youth community centers, elderly homes, monthly international parties, and neighborhood sports events. The cult sponsors high profile public activities that run the gamut of service functions as long as it appears beneficial in the public eye. At a grassroots level the cult seems to have won over the people, but authorities have become wary of this powerful and uncontrollable organization.

Theme: Internet acolytes, most recruited via the internet while still in college. Most individuals are socially stunted and are easily brainwashed into becoming vessels of destruction.

Indoctrination: Sect structure emphasizes a feeling of belonging and comradeship and so, after a time, socially aberrant behaviors regularly exhibited within the cult are viewed as the norm. Brainwashing is subtle at first. Initiates never realize that their behaviors are becoming increasingly bizarre. People targeted are often young, unmarried, and in their early twenties to thirties. They are indoctrinated and brainwashed through the media they have enjoyed their entire life: animation videos (anime), pulp comics (manga), and computer games.

Most neophytes are avid video and role-playing game enthusiasts. In fact, their vivid imaginations could be said to be one of their few marketable skills. The sect's manga department, BC Press, publishes in-house manga and animated features on the cult's doctrines, history, mission, and goals. Some acolytes are put to work helping in the creation process and are carefully guided by an Elder Brother. Most, however, are sucked further into the group delusion by consumption of these indoctrination media.

Avid computer users are reached through the use of cleverly programmed television and computer games, which are sold to neophytes with the aim of stripping all their worldly goods from them in the process of the indoctrination. These games, through the use of millisecond long bursts of color and subliminal commands can, over long hours of use, successfully program the mind to sway with the beat of the cult's groupthink. These games, playable on mass market game systems available in Japan, provide a way to program the minds of users with missions portrayed on the screen. After a certain point, neophytes become unable to differentiate reality from the game. If an Elder Brother deigns, freshly programmed followers are trained to become cult enforcers, called Tears, who carry out the video game in a live-action version. By the end of this indoctrination period, many cultists are trapped deep within a fantasy world, fervently believing in the cult's cause, even to the point of risking death for it.

Gamu Boyuzu, a New Drug

A skin contact drug. PO1 fr. Its effects occur after 1D3x hours or as the keeper wishes. Symptoms are disorientation, suggestibility, lack of appetite, light headedness, hallucinations, prolonged heightened emotional states, hyper-accelerated physical feats, and aggressive behavior.

The cult uses the drug to indoctrinate followers. A form of methylenedioxy-methylamphetamine, contact with it induces an ecstatic fugue state in which the follower is influenced by the drug as he or she absorbs the cult's doctrines as detailed in BC Press manga. The porous paper stock of the manga is soaked with the skin contact drug.

Match the PO1 fr of the drug against the target's CON on the Resistance Table. If the drug succeeds, the victim suffers the full effect of the drug. He or her mind highly suggestible, full of fantasy induced hallucinations and his or her will significantly weakened. If the target wins, he or she remains significantly light headed and disoriented. Each hour of exposure to the drug requires a fresh match on the Resistance Table.

Minds able to resist the two-month-long brainwashing process are inducted into the greater mysteries of the cult. Following this path, they are trained in ritual magic and cult doctrine to become Elder Brothers, part of the elite.

Hierarchy: The cult is organized in cells using multiples of 7, with ideal maximum size of a branch unit being 2800 members headed by one exalted spiritual leader. Neophytes are called "the Tears of Buddha," to be shed for his cause. Seven Tears, or *Namida*, are supervised by one Elder Brother often ranked as the Hand of Buddha, or *Busu no Te*. The Hand of Buddha is responsible for the consequences of any actions that his Tears commit, a paternalistic tradition practiced up the entire chain of command. Hands also are first rank initiates into the inner order. In turn, each seven Hands of Buddha are overseen by the Eyes of Buddha, or *Busu no Me*, also second rank initiates. Eyes of the Buddha often supervise large projects and can be trusted to operate public operations like companies and community centers without constant monitoring.

Hierarchy of the Buddha's Tears

Crown of the Buddha: Asahara Shinyama, leader

Mouths of the Buddha: high priests of the order. Each of the 7 Mouths runs a cult facility and manages 7 Eyes.

Eyes of the Buddha: second rank initiates. Each of the 49 Eyes runs a cult business or project and manages 7 Hands.

Hands of the Buddha: first rank initiates. Each of the 343 Hands acts as an "elder brother" for 7 Tears.

Tears of the Buddha: neophytes. The 2401 Tears are the foot soldiers and laborers of the cult.

Rank-and-File: 19,608 members.

Peripheral Members: 137,200 members worldwide.

In charge of seven Eyes of the Buddha is a Mouth of the Buddha, or *Busu no Kuchi*, who writes and decides cult doctrine, acts as a high priest for the order, and runs each of the worldwide branches of the cult. Busu no Kuchi are also master-ranked adepts who conduct ceremonies in the inner magical order.

Leadership: At the very top of the cult hierarchy is the Crown of the Buddha or the the Pure Blooded Master, called *Jyun-ketsu-sama* in Japanese, who is also the cult leader. His real name is Asahara Shinyama.

Doctrine/Dogma: All that Buddha taught to the masses is a lie. Only his dying words contained wisdom of the true nature of reality, and only Buddha's Tears, spiritual descendants of the ancient Forbidden Brotherhood, bear this gift of enlightenment. The unenlightened will squirm like eels in the eight hells at the feet of the Great Old One upon his return in this, the age of Mappo. But followers of Buddha's true teachings can reach Nirvana before Earth becomes a living hell. With each life willfully taken from another, a cultist removes one incarnation from his own destined wheel of reincarnation, also called samsara. Nirvana is guaranteed upon the taking of 108 lives, equal also to the 108 worldly sins in this realm.

Unconfirmed Rumors:

- Cultists are conducting underwater archeology using the cult's private island as a base of operations in the tropical Pacific near Okinawa.
- Of late, whole families of people, seeking the return of loved ones who have fallen in with the cult, have mysteriously vanished.
- The National Police Force has failed to make any connections other than missing persons reports. Some observers believe that the NPF is compromised by the cult, as are many other public institutions.

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OFFICIAL PROJECT YÛREI OPERATIONS POLICY: BUDDHA'S TEARS

Project staff are urged to avoid personal contact as cult arguments can be persuasive after long contact, especially when combined with the surreptitious use of mind-altering substances by cult members on victims. If detained by cultists, or even if in a safe location in public, a Project member is not to make his or her affiliation known, no matter what the cost. The cult is already extremely hostile to our organization and admission of membership puts an employee's life in dire peril. Feign ignorance or pretend you are acting on your own. Hazard pay, triple pay scale, will be given in compensation to all employees who must endure these hardships. It is known to the cult, through interrogation of captured Project staff, that we possess powerful occult items of interest to them. This is further reason to limit contact as Yotsubishi security teams have already thwarted one break-in attempt at the Tokyo labs. Buddha's Tears cultists were the suspected culprits.

Internal Security Assessment Division
Yotsubishi Securities International
Kitty Sanrio

- Several second-hand reports suggest that the actions of the cult are becoming increasingly bold, possibly in preparation for a catastrophic attack on a large population center with biological agents or nerve gas.

Field Reports: Works of non-sensitive propaganda are shipped to branches worldwide and translated into English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Swahili. They all utilize scientifically proven methods of mind control. Videotapes, for instance, have been found to contain hidden microchips within the cassette. The chips act as homing beacons and transmitters for subliminal messages that can be displayed automatically on the victim's television. Vast resources have been invested in these mind control methods and in disguising them. Any attempt to tamper with the chips causes the cassette to short and self-destruct.

Secret History

The modern cult Buddha's Tears claims to trace its origins to the immigration of fugitive Dugpas from Tibet in the eighth century, and that the organization, under one name or another, has been a safe haven for sorcerers and ritual practitioners of degenerate esoteric Buddhism for millennia. In ages past, they were called "The Forbidden Brotherhood" after the sacred text that they had protected through the ages. More accurate is that the Buddha's Tears date back to the very beginning of the Meiji Era in the 1880s when a mysterious figure known as the Black Monk bestowed great secrets upon the great grandfather of current cult leader Asahara Shinyama, then master of the Kuga clan of ninja. Grandfather Atsushi Shinyama trained under the tutelage of the Black Monk and formed Buddha's Tears to act as the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus's eyes and ears in Japan. The cult moved in secret for almost a century, functioning much like the standard ninja clan until Asahara Shinyama took the reins in the 1940s. The resultant philosophical gulf between the Brotherhood and Buddha's Tears has caused the cult to lose many of its secrets and much of its power. The cult has begun in recent years to blindly try to destroy everyone in order to extinguish reincarnation. The most advanced rituals of the Tears involve sacrificing victims to Great Old Ones who greedily devour their souls. With the rise of the new religions in the 1960s, Shinyama chose to go public and swell the ranks of the cult with aggressive recruitment. Today, many of the community works that Butsu no Namida sponsors act as culling centers for those who won't be missed in society. Most are converted to the cause while a few are used for much darker purposes.

The headquarters in Kyoto features four sub-levels where the most secret rituals, experiments, and artifacts are hidden. All levels are constructed of reinforced concrete thick enough to withstand a direct Tomahawk strike. The first sub-level stores enough supplies to weather a five-year holocaust. The second floor of the sub-basement contains biotech and chemical labs for the production of nerve gas and bio-toxins, as well as storage space for the end products. These rooms are hermetically sealed with the same fail-safes as in governmental facilities. The third sub-level, protected by voice-print secured doors requiring the recitation of key doctrine chants, is a treasury of the most sanctified of occult artifacts as well as the private meeting rooms and accommodations for the elite of this cult. The fourth sub-level is only accessible by the Mouths of the Buddha and leads to a vast subterranean chamber where a massive volcanic chasm opens in the floor, revealing flowing red-hot magma hundreds of feet below. It is here where the darkest rituals are performed by the cult. Incidentally, this is also where the cult disposes of dissenters, scientific mishaps, and the occasional nosy investigator.

Mythos Associations

Cultists often unwittingly summon an avatar form Nyarlathotep (see in Japan: Aku-Shin Kage, the Dark Warlord. On rare occasions, Nyarlathotep also appears as the Bloated Woman, native to China. Through the aid of Nyarlathotep, the cult has successfully summoned Japanese monsters of myth such as yōkai and oni to do the cult's bidding. Recently the main headquarters in Kyoto successfully contacted Tsuloggua, dubbing him "the Sleeping Prophet," and gained several favors in the exchange. Some Central Asian branches of the cult actively worship Chaugnar Faugn as the Dark Buddha. Contact has also been made with the kappa kingdom located off the sunken ruins near Okinawa.

Notable Mythos Tomes

The headquarters of the cult contains an eastern occult library with holdings rivaling those of Tokyo University. Less sensitive holdings are kept out in branch houses for sect research. Most notable, and the core of their whole sect, is *The Forbidden Sutra*, or *Kinki Kyōten* in Japanese. Of that book, the sect currently holds a partial copy of the Shingon fourteenth century edition, about 32 of the 54 scrolls. There are also six clay tablets of the sixth century Mandarin edition (30% complete). There is also an entire illuminated eighteenth century edition crafted by the Forbidden Brotherhood in its Tibetan monastery.

Current Goals and Projects

One of the cult's ongoing projects is to actively siphon life energy from its members through astral cords connected to each ordinary member's solar plexus, as evidenced by the wasting and vacuousness so common to lower ranked members. This and blood sacrifices serve to power the cult's occult experiments, which are conducted in the lowest levels of the main Kyoto headquarters. The location of the HQ on tectonic conjunctions is no accident, for they plan to summon a Great Old One soon in order to herald in the new epoch and end the ascendancy of man. The cult plans to apply its fabricated anthrax and VX gas over a large population center, possibly several at once, including overseas targets, as part of a mass human sacrifice for the Mythos summoning ritual.

Buddha's Tears, Cultists

I lied like I was, there was no way I could crane my neck around to see my surroundings, but my captors forced me down endless flights of steps which opened into a cool cavern. Here, low chanting could be heard. Finally they removed my blindfold. Just on the edge of my vision I could see an orange glow, presumably from the fissure, and many cultists gathered in a largish circle. As we approached this gathering, a blast of heat hit my face and the magma's light made clear a black amorphous thing easily touching the cavern roof. This horror from the void became more solid with the steady droning chant of the robe-clad group. But my greatest shock were the words, words that were no pagan enchantment but Buddhist prayers. It was with holy sutras they were summoning this thing from the hells itself!

—extract from Shintaro Watanabe's unpublished memoirs.

Mindlessly devoted to their mission, Tears of the Buddha act out the scenarios they have played out hundreds of times during the indoctrination process. They are often trapped in a fantasy world of their own making and can be heard to quote point values for scores and other actions within the games that are playing in their heads when they attack victims. For game purposes, they are considered indefinitely insane, but not beyond hope if deprogrammed. In all aspects, rank-and-file members of this cult are just average humans who have been

thoroughly brainwashed by the cult. More dangerous are the willing members who have access to spells and Mythos knowledge.

BUDDHA'S TEARS, Fanatical Cultists

char.	*Tears*	*Hands*	*Eyes*	*Mouths*
STR	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
CON	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
SIZ	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
INT	2D6	3D6	3D6+2	3D6+6
POW	2D6	2D6+6	3D6+6	3D6+8
DEX	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
APP	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
HP	10–11	10–11	10–11	10–11

Move 8

Av. Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+db
Bow of Karma (crossbow) 50%, damage 1D4+2
Other weapons as appropriate.

Spells: Tears, none; Hands, 1D2; Eyes, 1D4; Mouths, 2D4. Common ones would be those from *The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears* or *Kinki Kyōten*, especially Dance of Karma (Bestow Karma), Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Instant Enlightenment, and Prolong the Suffering (Healing).

Armor: none.

Skills:

- Tears—Cthulhu Mythos 01%, Dodge 37%, Hide 38%, Listen 33%, Lore (Buddhism) 06%, Meditation 10%, Sneak 53%, Spot Hidden 41%, Zoku (Otaku, Ronin, or choose one) 40%.
- Hands—Cthulhu Mythos 06%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 32%, Hide 47%, Listen 40%, Lore (Buddhism) 19%, Martial Art (Choose One) 40%, Meditation 22%, Occult 11%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 27%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Zoku (choose one) 50%, Zoku (Yakuza) 40%.
- Eyes—Accounting 41%, Credit Rating 38%, Cthulhu Mythos 13%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 50%, Listen 46%, Lore (Buddhism) 34%, Meditation 35%, Occult 25%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 34%, Shōdō 15%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 55%, Zoku (Yakuza) 50%.
- Mouths—Accounting 50%, Credit Rating 56%, Cthulhu Mythos 21%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 70%, Listen 59%, Lore (Buddhism) 61%, Meditation 47%, Occult 46%, Persuade 71%, Psychology 41%, Shōdō 42%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 60%, Zoku (Yakuza) 60%.

The keeper may modify these skill lists as deemed appropriate.

BUDDHA'S TEAR

Beads of 108 Sins

Each soldier of the cult, called a Tear, bears on his left wrist a traditional-looking Buddhist prayer rosary of 108 beads. Each bead represents each life of self sacrifice a Tear must experience. When the last bead is reached, he or she has achieved peace and will no longer experience the suffering of rebirth but reach the blissful nothingness of Nirvana, where the Buddha awaits. Construction of these beads is an ancient secret going back to the foundation of the Forbidden Brotherhood. Some postulate that the beads are a remnant of Muvian technology.

- The beads are enchanted. After each sacrifice to end the cycle of life, a bead in the chain turns from wood to gold with the name of the sacrifice engraved on the bead. The 108th bead is reserved for the Tear wearing it, whose soul is automatically pulled into the bead upon completing sacrifice 107.
- If, after a Tear begins a mission, he or she loses faith, or an outsider gains possession of the beads, the beads' magic ceases, returning them to wood and releasing all of the imprisoned souls, who will most likely be very angry.
- Each bead with a trapped soul contains 1 POW, representing the last essence of that soul. The high priests of the cult, the Mouths of Buddha, use these rosaries to power their dark rituals. Preferably they desire fully enchanted rosaries, but nothing stops them from utilizing partial beads.

To implement their mission, tears carry a small collapsible hand crossbow made of sacred Japanese cypress, hinoki. The small bolts are made also of hinoki and the fletchings of lotus paper. The tip of the shaft is a nasty silver tri-blade and along the length of the shaft is a sutra prayer on "the Truth of Samsara" taken from the text of the *Forbidden Sutra*. The Tear expends 10 magic points when firing. If the bolt slays a person, the soul is placed in the beads.

Brotherhood of the Black Lotus

Let he who is pure be cast down—
Let he who is innocent be corrupted—
Let he who is virtuous be reviled—
Let he who seeks Nirvana be shown astray—
—For he is not of this world.
And should be seen on his way.

—Black Monk upon meeting a Green Cap in Kyoto circa 1640 C.E., *The Mysterious Path (Mahafushigi Michi).*

Aliases: Dugpas, the Green Caps, or *Midori Bōshi* in Japanese.

Organization Type: Monastery. Hierarchical structure based on priesthood designations.

Estimated Membership: Unknown, possibly fifty core members and several hundred spies, informants, and contacts with the outside world. Associates loosely with the Buddha's Tears, Dragon Lords, and dozens of other elite groups. Brotherhood spies clandestinely act as members of other organizations.

Threat Assessment: In numbers, danger would seem to be low, but the influence exerted by the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus upon other occult groups is chilling. A field agent almost never directly encounters a Brother of the Green Caps; rather, he or she must deal with a legion of loyal supporters and guards enlisted to aid the ring leader.

Holdings and Interests: Unknown. Influence in most of the world's esoteric religions and participation in the Asian drug trade indicate that lack of wealth does not hinder their schemes.

Capital Assets: Unknown; see "Holdings and Interests," above.

Headquarters: Unknown. Believed to be in the near-mythical location, Shamballah, in the Himalayas near Tibet. Exact location is accessible only by members due to extreme weather and severe geographical features. Local peoples, the Sherpa, refuse to aid inquiries, reportedly fearing reprisals by "the Emerald God."

Known History: This group is believed to be as ancient as the death of the Buddha (c. 544 B.C.E.) or at least the foundation of Buddhism as an organized religion. In fact, the organization makes no secret that they consider themselves to possess the one unpolluted true lineage of learned masters leading directly back to Siddhartha himself, in the sacred personage of the Emerald Lama.

They are caretakers of the *Forbidden Sutra*, the final words of the dying form of the last physically manifested Buddha, Siddhartha. His most secret teachings are so shocking that most of his followers refused to believe they were true and not the ramings of a delusional man. They declared his last words heretical and struck them from the record of history. Certain founders of the brotherhood, however, faithfully took his words to heart and founded the Forbidden Brotherhood. For centuries, the *Forbidden Sutra* was passed down orally from one Brotherhood lama to another until it was recorded in Sanskrit.

The local Tibetans came to call members of the Brotherhood "Green Caps" (not to be confused with the "Red Caps" of the same region) because of the ceremonial hats they wore when they practiced their degenerate Buddhist tantric blood rituals. During the entire course of their existence, the Green Caps have fought an endless holy war with the Yellow Caps, adherents of mainstream sects of Buddhism. Almost wiped out several times in their long history, the Green Caps took to secretive magics and deceptive dealings to protect their interests in degenerate practices such as drinking human blood from ritual skull goblets. They eventually confined themselves within a secret valley somewhere in Tibet, which in some languages is dubbed *Shamballah*.

The Emerald Lama, along with many other ascended masters and holy men, members of the Children of the One, were waiting for them in Shamballah when the Brotherhood arrived. The Brotherhood, awed by the Lama, adopted him as their prophesied leader.

The Brotherhood of the Black Lotus first became known in the West in the nineteenth century when spiritualist Mme. Blavatsky referred to them as the "Dugpas" in her work, the *Secret Doctrine*. How she came to know of them is unclear but her work ushered in the Orientalism movement and interested numerous Western occultists and secret societies in the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus. Aleister Crowley became so intrigued he painted a picture of the Emerald Lama and mistakenly called him *LAM*. Members of the Nazi-leaning occult group, the Thule Society, sought out Shamballah and the secrets the ascended masters could offer. Some were even visited by the Emerald Lama himself. (For more historical detail, see the narratives in the entries for the *Forbidden Sutra* and the Emerald Lama, pages 123–125 and 252–254, respectively.)

There is unconfirmed evidence that the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus may have even played a role in the foundation of Project Yûrei's forerunner in WWII. It is certain that they played an as-yet undisclosed role in the biological atrocities wrought by the infamous Unit 731. Whatever their designs at Unit 731, they created dissension and a splinter group calling themselves the Buddha's Tears broke away in disagreement, feeling that the focus should be on the use of religion to control the masses, as State Shinto was doing during the war. During this time, the Green Caps lost their most loyal power bases when Nagasaki and Hiroshima were destroyed by nuclear bombs. How the Allies came coincidentally to choose these two cities for atomic destruction is beyond speculation.

In the past fifty years, the Brotherhood has struggled to rebuild, but has been severely hampered with the rise of the cult Buddha's Tears. Today, members of the Brotherhood pretend to be ascended masters and have heavily influenced many New Age movements and new religions around the world. They utilize the energies they misdirect from others to power their own plans. With a symbolic 108 members worldwide, the Green Caps work to ensure dangerous Mythos information falls into the hands of those who can do the most damage with it and ensure the unset of Mappo.

This degenerate sect's interests do not lie only in the realm of the spiritual. It is believed that the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus has played a heavy role in the drug trade in Asia for many centuries. The Chinese Triads grow much of their opium in an area of the Himalayas called the Golden Triangle. It is conjectured that the ultimate leaders of these drug operations are members of the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus. Preliminary research indicates that the Brotherhood may have controlled and encouraged the opium epidemic which kept all of Asia in a karmic stranglehold for the last two centuries. Besides opium, there are rumors of a much rarer one, the Lao drug, for a more discriminating clientele.

Theme: Secrecy and duplicity. Layer upon layer of dead ends, false fronts, and countless minions are stock and trade of the Brotherhood's hand in affairs.

Indoctrination: New members, by invitation only, are rarely if ever allowed entry into this group. Only occultists of the highest caliber are offered membership and the offer is held out only once.

Leadership: The Emerald Lama is the holy leader of the Brotherhood. When he dies, the Brotherhood seeks out a Tiberan new-born child bearing the green birthmark. This child is the incarnated thought-form of the holy leader. At eight years of age he manifests fully as the Emerald Lama. The Black Monk acts as the sect's representative in Japan.

Doctrine/Dogma: The Brotherhood is about confusing the message of mainstream Buddhism, which it sees as a mistaken path that leads the masses to falsehood about the true nature of the universe. Proponents of Mappo, the age of corruption and end of the humankind's dominance on Earth, the Brotherhood has been poisoning the Dharma, the truth, throughout their millennia of existence. They encourage the corruption of humankind and the return to worship of the Great Old Ones.

Unconfirmed Rumors:

- The tengu are natural enemies of the Dugpas and will aid those who consider them foes as well.
- The Tendai and Shingon sects of esoteric Buddhism in Japan have been deeply infiltrated by the Brotherhood.
- It is believed that the Brotherhood has the ear of the imperial household with its great command of tantric and magical lore, much like the Zen sect held the ear of the Tokugawa rulers.

A BROTHERHOOD RITUAL

BROTHERS OF THE BLACK LOTUS, Masters of Conspiracies

char.	*rolls*	*averages*
STR	3D6	10–11
CON	3D6	10–11
SIZ	3D6	10–11
INT	4D6	14
POW	4D6	14
DEX	3D6	10–11
APP	3D6	10–11
Move 8		HP 10–11

Av. Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3
Staff 75%, damage 1D6+db
9mm Auto 50%, damage 1D10

Armor: none.

Spells: 1D8 spells, usually those found within the *Forbidden Sutra* or at the keeper's discretion. They often have 1D3 magical artifacts or trinkets at their disposal: a Brother would most likely have a kyonshi in his employ as a magical bodyguard.

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 55%, Fast Talk 75%, Listen 65%, Lore (Tiberan Buddhism) 81%, Meditation 90%, Occult 90%, Psychology 80%, Persuade 75%, Shôdô 75%.

Secret History

The Imperial Army was aware of the Brotherhood's great occult wealth and, taking a page from the Thule Society in Germany, sought out Green Cap strongholds on mainland Asia during WWII. It is believed the Manchurian Incident was a major power play by Japanese imperialists to wrest power from the Emerald Lama's followers. The sacking of Manchuria, Taiwan, and Burma were all desperate attempts by the new Japanese esoteric splinter group, Buddha's Tears, in alliance with the Dragon Lords and using the Imperial Army to claim several key Mythos tomes, to initiate genetic change of Japanese Emperor Hirohito. The goal: to open dimensional Gates to the Six Realms and unleash the Great Old One, Mappo no Ryûjin. This 1940s attempt to start Mappo obviously failed, for the rite required specific pages from six different Mythos tomes found in Japan (*The Forbidden Sutra*, *The Shinwa Taizen*, *The Sixth Ring*, *The Mysterious Path*, *The Tao of Immortality*, and *The Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*) which together form a mandala and a formula for summoning the Mappo no Ryûjin. For more history concerning the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus, see the entries for *The Forbidden Sutra* and the Emerald Lama on pages 123–125 and 252–254, respectively.

Location

Existing concurrently in Tibet as well as in the Dreamlands and in the planetary ruins of the tengu homeworld, Shamballah is home to the Brotherhood of the One and houses various alien and ancient Earth temples, all lining a placid turquoise lake and dedicated to enlightenment.

Mythos Associations

- The Brotherhood has strong ties with the plateaus of Leng and Sung, and regularly trades with the Tcho-Tcho peoples.
- The Black Monk is the emissary for the Emerald Lama in Japan and by extension an associate of the Brotherhood, but this enigmatic being chooses to work alone.

- The Brotherhood subtly pulls the strings of the Buddha's Tears cult, and much of the dogma of that misguided group of fanatics is an interpretation of the Dugpas' own doctrines. Although the Brotherhood and the Tears are enemies, the Brotherhood carefully nudges the Tears into serving the Brotherhood's agenda over time while the Tears believe it to be their own.

Black Lotus

The climate within the valley of Shamballah is optimal for growing and harvesting the black lotus, a strange flower brought from Hyperborea during the great exodus of Lemurians and Mu'ians to the haven. The Black Lotus is central to the ritual practices of the Brotherhood. It is believed by this secret society that the poison used to kill the Buddha was derived from the Black Lotus; it induced his visionary state in which he related many great secrets of cosmic truth. The wizard priests of the Brotherhood hold that only this flower, when distilled into the Liao drug, may invoke the proper meditative states for true enlightenment and understanding of passages within the *Forbidden Sutra*. Using Liao in essence emulates the path of the Buddha as he lay dying. Their leader, the Emerald Lama, is often portrayed sitting upon a black lotus blossom. Priests of the Leng and Sung Plateaus and the Tcho-Tcho peoples occasionally barter with Brotherhood monks for the precious flower, in order to better worship the Great Old Ones Zhar and Uoigor.

Tomes in the Brotherhood's Possession

Among the many Eastern tomes found in the Dugpas' monastery are the following:

- *The Black Sutra*—in Burmese, by U Pan, c. seventh century. Sanity loss 1D4/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles.
- *The Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*—in Chinese, by Hsan the Greater, c. second century. Sanity loss 1D4/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +9 percentiles.
- *Samsara Sutra Siddhartha (The Forbidden Sutra)*—in Sanskrit, Forbidden Brotherhood, c. third century. This version is core to their cult and is the oldest and most complete copy in existence. Sanity loss 1D8/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +12 percentiles. (See also pages 123–125.)
- *Makafushigi Michi (The Mysterious Path)*—in Japanese, by Kuroi Bohzu, c. sixteenth century. The Black Monk has regular contact with this group. Sanity loss 1D4/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +7 percentiles. (See also pages 126–128.)

Current Goals and Projects

A faction within the Brotherhood, the "Order of the Ebony Kannon," holds to the precept that outer transformation must precede inner enlightenment. This faction worships the Outer God Yidhra in the guise of the Ebony Kuan Yin, an avatar that is a warped mockery of the bodhisattva Kuan Yin (Kannon). Favoring accelerated evolution of the body, even to the extreme of alien intermingling, the Order has been involved in DNA tinkering for centuries. During WWII, the Order manipulated imperial officers within Military Biological Unit 731 to aid their temporary allies, the Dragon Lords, in creating a serpent person-human hybrid using Chinese victims. The experimentation was an unmitigated failure, killing thousands in cruel experiments. It was further hampered by the then commander of Unit 731, Shintaro Ikeda, when a series of bizarre and gruesome deaths of imperial soldiers put the unit's activity under imperial scrutiny. The mysterious death of Ikeda a month later in a similar manner halted this secret project. Today, the Order seeks to continue the goal of generic manipulation by using spies within Yotsubishi's Psi-Mech to influence the funding of R&D programs involving genetic engineering, biomorph experimentation and the grafting of alien DNA code to human hosts for bio-mechanical augmentation. The Order is quietly pursuing the same goal it pursued with Unit 731 but with considerably less attention and a great deal more finesse.

* YOTSUBISHI SECURITIES INTERNAL DOCUMENT *

* PROJECT YÛREI WHITE PAPER *

* INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION ONLY! VIOLATORS WILL BE CRIMINALLY PROSECUTED! *

OFFICIAL PROJECT YÛREI OPERATIONS POLICY: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLACK LOTUS

The most secretive organization in Japan, little is known about the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus. They are highly effective in implementing their plans and it is only months later that Project Yûrei operatives are able to piece together facts from the aftermath. It is feared what may one day happen if this group decides to do something destructive or on a massive scale. Operatives of Project Yûrei are instructed to steer clear of any suspected Dugpa activity. Your life may depend upon it.

Internal Security Assessment Division
Yotsubishi Securities International
Kitty Sanrio

Shamballah

Shamballah is a secret mystical community of seekers after enlightenment clinging to the mountainsides of either the Himalayas, the Kun Lun, or the Altais in Mongolia and Tibet. It is said that the Pakrala Fortress in Lhasa is but a pale reflection of the true paradise, Shamballah, the white island of enlightenment. It is variously dubbed Shambhala, Shamballah, Shambala and even Shangri-La. But, it is also said there are two Shamballahs.

The earthly version is in the far north, with the aurora borealis (actually rays of psychic energy) emanating from its mystical heights. In this material Shamballah, near-immortal arhats and lamas humbly meditate upon the future of humanity. They are able to see the future and the savagery into which humanity will degenerate. They are determined to save the best works of human culture for the next age.

There is also an invisible Shamballah, an ethereal doppleganger said to be the dwelling place of Maitreya and ascended masters who watch over the welfare of humanity and who are charged with elevating mankind into a state of unity with the universe.

With architecture taken from Tibet's artistic golden age, Shamballah's ochre and white buildings cling to cliffs in the valley. At the bottom, a placid turquoise lake provides an endless bounty of food. Monks raise rice and barley, along with mind-altering substances to aid meditation such as the black lotus and the silver lotus. Solar energy provides power via a system of crystal technology once used in Atlantis. The greatest asset is the Tower of Shamballah, not a physical structure but rather the sage leader of this valley of ascended masters the shining lotus, ruler of the spiritual plane, and fire of life—the Emerald Lama. Tibetans believe that the annihilation of Tibetan culture is the final sign before the Shamballah King, Rudra Cakrin, appears to save the world.

How can such a place exist on a planet so thoroughly mapped and accessible by aircraft? Many factors aid in this paradise's secrecy. The near unreachable valley is in the highest mountains of the world in one of the most desolate and sparsely populated regions on Earth, and is protected by local hill people against the inquiries of strangers. Those lucky enough to know the general vicinity must also pass through one of several narrow cavernous passages and deal with the lethal border of Shamballah—caves riddled by poisonous volcanic exhaust vents and caustic vapors that linger at ground level. At best a person wanders away an amnesiac and at worst dies in a matter of minutes.

One Western explorer, Russian Nicholas Roerich, did reach Shamballah in the 1920s, found a secret passage, and survived the flames to enter the hidden paradise of the lush and verdant valley. He found among other great secrets that the Kingdom of Agharti (as he called it) is linked by underground tunnels to the rest of the world. Roerich also uncovered a subterranean system populated by a psychokinetic race, the vril, with designs upon conquering the upper world. Roerich took further details of this race to his grave. It is believed that the vril race are the same beings the Thule Society first contacted, leading to a personal meeting of Adolf Hitler and the Emerald Lama. Strangely, it was only weeks after this meeting that Hitler became more and more detached from the actual events of the war, resulting in fatal tactical mistakes which led to Germany's defeat. However, all is not evil and tainted in Shamballah; there do exist many genuine enlightened masters, but only the most devout seeker will find them among the white noise of the many false prophets cluttering the secret valley. The glowing beacon of the Emerald Lama tends to divert people from the true path they originally sought. And as the true spiritual lamas are unable to intercede for another person, seekers must make their own choices.

Dragon Lords
(Ryû-Ryôshû)

Dragon stars shine—
Seeing all, it waits its turn
To make pure once more.
—Mythos Haiku, *Rock Garden on Infinity*

Aliases: Radical right, ultra-nationalist, Bringers of the New Golden Empire of the Sun.

Organization Type: Underworld, semi-legal organization. Oyabun-kobun relationships; foot soldiers are gangsters and racketeers.

Estimated Membership: Estimated at 75,000 people worldwide. About 10–15% of any Yakuza gumi, the Japanese Mafia families, are also secretly Ryû-Ryôshû members.

Threat Assessment: Risk of bodily harm is quite high from this organization's lower ranks. Any supernatural hazard appears to be an issue only in encounters with members of higher status.

Holdings and Interests: Difficult to determine. Larger domain houses are known to exist within the largest cities of Japan (Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo), as well as a domain house in Los Angeles. As soon as a location is pinned down and reported, however, returning investigators find an abandoned location. House haunts are usually found in one of the seedy lower class districts of the city.

Capital Assets: The Dragon Lords' financial holdings are interwoven tightly within the Yakuza crime syndicates and radical right organizations who act as their fronts, so valuing their true monetary worth is a questionable effort at best.

Headquarters: Believed to be in Tokyo, though the location is unknown.

Known History: Calling themselves the Dragon Lords, this group has been in existence since at least the time of the Yakuza confederations in the sixteenth century. Did the Dragon Lords exist in some form before then? They might have roots in a previous incarnation called the Serpent Cult, an offshoot co-existing with the main religion of Shinto since prehistory. Throughout modern history the Dragon Lords have been staunch supporters of Japan as a supreme nation in command of its own destiny. To the average Japanese, they seem to be merely over-zealous nationalists from a time better forgotten by a modern, peaceful Japan.

The goals of the Dragon Lords have always seemed to run parallel to, but separate from, the common struggles of the Japanese people. Even when modern Japan was at its most strife-ridden, like a calm eye of the storm there have been the cool and well-organized Dragon Lords.

Project Yûrei suspects that the controlling intelligence behind the Dragon Lords is not of human origin. There are those of the Project who feel that the dragon iconography points clearly to the long worship of a non-human god or being.

The upper echelons of this group have been tightly structured and highly consistent in policy for several centuries. Never has a high ranked Dragon King been usurped by another, nor has there ever been any type of internal strife within the ranks. Compared to the all-too-human

chaos of the cut-throat Yakuza, this politeness and far-sighted behavior begs closer inspection. Indeed, considering the sort of rabble that makes up the membership, this behavior is otherwise inexplicable.

Theme: Serpent and dragon motifs figure heavily in the symbolism of this group as well as oaths of lifetime loyalty to the group or death in return. Japanese do not take joining the Dragon Lords lightly. An ultra-loyal honor-bound Yakuza is a good image for the typical member of this organization.

Indoctrination: Lower rank members take a blood oath to serve the organization and receive a tailed dragon tattoo upon the right forearm. As a Dragon Lord gains rank and seniority he or she gains increasingly complex dragon or snake motif tattoos on the body. The highest ranks bear intricate full body-length tattoos of a dragon upon back and chest. Seniority also opens a member to privileged inner secrets of the shadowy organization.

DRAGON LORD TATTOO

Hierarchy: Hierarchy of the organization is based upon oyabun-kobun relationship: that is to say mentor-student, or in strained situations, parent-child relationships. Low ranked members are watched for a long time before being offered initiation into the group. Most often these rank-and-file are the most vicious and clever of the common thugs found among gangs and organized crime. These kobun, or children, show fealty and loyalty to their oyabun, or parent. No official name exists for low ranking members but a common moniker used is *Serpents* or *Scales*. The local leaders, oyabun, in turn show fealty to higher ranked regional leaders, or ryu-oyabun, in a feudal system mirroring a normal Yakuza organization.

Leadership: The highest ranking leadership belongs to a shadowy council of elders whispered about by the oyabun. Not much more is known.

Doctrine/Dogma: Common doctrine among the higher echelons is that the Japanese race is destined for greatness but, for just what, they are close-lipped about. Dragon and serpent worship is common with members, who practice a variant form of Shinto which venerates only serpent and dragon kami deities. As a member rises in the ranks and proves trustworthy, he is indoctrinated into the secrets of the society and is changed by these revelations, often becoming even more dedicated to the group cause. He also becomes mystically bound to the organization through blood rites and serpent worship. The fact that the leaders possess great secrets can be sensed by even the lowest members, who become envious and desire to be privy to it as well, thus feeding the circle of power.

Common M.O.: All members of the Dragon Lords have almost unnatural levels of national pride and love for all things uniquely Japanese, often shunning anything perceived as Western whenever possible. These are the people you will see wearing traditional clothes like Kimono and Japanese sandals, *geta*, on the streets. They don't stick out as much as one would think, due to the presence of normal Yakuza who also favor traditional garb, and older people who may dress similarly.

With quiet investigation, individual Dragon Lord members often can be identified by their investments in traditional businesses and their frequenting of such locations. It goes without saying that Dragon Lords are hostile to non-Japanese and even less friendly to those foreigners of Japanese descent.

Unconfirmed Rumors: Rumors abound of human sacrifice of foreign call-girls and workers smuggled illegally into the country by the underworld. Thousands have disappeared without a trace and the authorities do nothing; since they do not exist in the official national records, they are untraceable.

Field Reports: Encounters in the field are often accidental, since the motives of this group are unclear and their movements even less so. They seem to operate in a lord-vassal network with individual members having only "need-to-know" information and privileges based on their position within the society. The ambulatory nature of their headquarters makes tracking them down troublesome as its foot soldiers often know less than nothing about long-term goals and aims.

Items of Particular Interest: Project field agents captured a crumbling copy of the *Shinwa Taizen to Densa no Nippon* after a run-in with some Serpents. Laboratory dating puts it as a sixteenth century work. Though the book appears authentic, the content runs contrary to any known public copy of the *Kojiki* or the *Nihon Shoki*.

Secret History

As the prime minister walked to the podium I gazed into his eyes. Eyes cold and almost inhuman in their demeanor—I was positive he was one of them. Transfixed on his eyes, to my bewildering disbelief, a shadowy menacing form resolved itself over the thin carriage of the prime minister. A hunched drooping neck ending in a thick serpentine head mocked the gangly man's gestures, but before I could fully realize the features of this apparition I found three dangerous-looking men striding quickly to intercept me.

Since before recorded history, there thrived ancient civilizations peopled by beings beyond the imagination of most humans. Long ago, on the continent of Mu, a race of serpent people arose. They built mighty cities and commanded the most powerful of wizardry. But time took its toll on the serpent race, and as the race of mankind grew in numbers they fought savage battles to establish primitive kingdoms carved from the lands of the serpent people. By that time the serpent people had become decadent and degenerate shadows of their former glory. At first, some factions of the serpent people deigned to embrace the savage humans as brothers and taught them the ways of magic and civilization. In the north, in Hyperborea, the grateful humans repaid this consideration by conquering the serpent cities and driving the survivors of the snake race into hiding.

Something quite different developed on the enlightened continent of Mu. The population of serpent people treated the humans as equals, educating them with the ways of civilization, both races worshiping the Great Old One Yig in thanks. Eventually a hierarchically based feudal civilization developed, with serpents and humans co-existing peacefully at all ranks.

This kingdom of Mu came to be called the Golden Empire of the Sun. It existed for thousands of years in relative harmony, isolated from the outside world. The secret of successful rule was that at each level of society an advocate for each race represented its sector in society, with the highest rank belonging to the dragon king for the serpent race and the emperor for the human race. The two peoples of the Golden Empire of the Sun were further intermingled through magical mating and high enchantment, infusing one race with the blood of the other in sacred blood rites.

Like all things, this civilization at last collapsed and its populations were forced to flee when the continent of Mu was sunk by Yig and the Mappo no Ryūjin. The serpent people did not fare as well as the humans. By the time the remains of this civilization approached the mainland of the Japanese Archipelago in 25,000 B.C.E., very few of the serpent race remained; most who survived the downfall of Mu lost the favor of Yig and reverted to serpents within several generations.

To show thanks for the new land and to remember the past glory of Mu, the colonists established one last great city of temples and sacred worship sites that would later form the genesis of the native Shinto faith. This settlement, now totally erased by the march of time with the exception of underground tunnels and chambers, was located in what is now the seat of the emperor and the religious capital of Japan, the ancient city of Kyoto. Interestingly, there is a remnant of the now submerged Mu very close to the Japanese held Ryukyu islands in Okinawa Prefecture about five hundred miles southwest of the main islands. An ancient Muvian city previously located in the outermost provincial districts of the Muvian empire, it survives to this day submerged beneath two hundred feet of water. It was re-discovered only recently and dubbed by the media "the Yonaguni Monuments" after nearby Yonaguni Island. Beneath the waves, thousands of serpent people sorcerers and rulers still survive in suspended animation chambers in expansive flooded grottos and massive air pockets. The Dragon Lords and other groups were made aware of these sunken ruins only in the last year and are now scrambling to dive on the site and find salvage or powerful artifacts there to aid their ambitions.

Remnants of the Muvian wizard priest class fled to mainland plateaus now called Tibet and formed a colony with Lemurians which is known in myths throughout the world as Shamballah or Shangri-La (see also pages 188 and 252–254). Human memories of this place are reflected in universal tales of an unreachable paradise peopled by great ascendant masters. But the reality is that millennia of isolation have bred a degenerate sect of humans with great psychic powers who eschew the body in favor of the powers of the mind. They still worship the Great Old Ones and with the rise of Buddhism came to worship a corrupt form of that religion.

Mainstream Buddhists euphemistically call them the Green Caps (normal Buddhist priests are referred to as Yellow Caps because of the hats lamas wear), though they call themselves the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus and worship the Emerald Lama, an avatar of Hastur. Much esoteric Eastern mysticism and occultism is heavily influenced by this group, including the sects of Tendai and Shingon, both imports from Tibetan forms. It is said that that the Green Caps even influenced the occult group known as the Thule Society in Nazi Germany, with rumored appearances of the Emerald Lama in occult circles in Europe.

Meanwhile, the humans of Japan quickly sank to barbarism. They became the Yayoi peoples of Japan and came to worship the serpent people and the Muvian wizard priests as gods, thus creating the basis for the Shinto religion. Forcing out an older Caucasian race, the Ainu themselves remnants of a much older civilization, the people of the Golden Empire of the Sun established themselves on the Japanese islands and christened it Land of the Rising Sun. As mentioned, their serpent brothers had regressed into snakes, gone into hiding, or gone into hibernation, with those choosing to remain active taking on the disguises of high-ranking humans and ruling things on high.

To this day, the Japanese people bear memories of this past and in quiet moments yearn to return to such a peaceful harmonious golden age. This impulse is strongest within the members of the Dragon Lords; their racial memories are rekindled via blood rites similar to those practiced so long ago. It is the Dragon Lords who have made it their duty and life to protect and hide the rare but still magically powerful serpent people and their cousins, the astral serpents, walking among the humans in modern Japan, selflessly carrying out the agendas of their serpentine masters.

Today, those of Muvian blood bear the mark of this pairing of serpent and human, and not only in the arena of Japan, for they have scattered to the far sides of the globe. These are the children of the fallen race, the nephilim. Carefully groomed for genetic purity, inhabited by astral serpents, they occupy positions of power in every country around the world. Children of the Merkovian Kings, they are the hidden rulers of the world. The Dragon Lords represent only a regional variation of the worldwide cult of the serpent. They are merely the most visible caretakers of this glorious heritage.

Mythos Associations

The Dragon Lords are servitors, enforcers, and henchmen for the serpent people. All but a select few of the serpent people are in hibernation, waiting to awaken at the dawn heralding the New Golden Empire of the Sun. Of those active within Japan, an unusually high number are adept with high magic. Almost all serpent men born here are throwbacks in ability. Perhaps this is attributable to the constant rites and rituals performed by human worshipers and the serpent people. Human members of the Dragon Lords actively worship the Mythos god Yig, who is pleased with the servitor capacity of these humans. Yig himself punishes human members who fall away from the organization with kisses from his white serpents. There are very few heretics. Yig has a special avatar who appears during this group's rituals in the form of a 30-foot-tall Eastern dragon.

HIGH RANKING DRAGON LORD

High ranking Dragon Lords either possess magical infusions of serpent characteristics or allow themselves to be possessed by the spirit or entity of a serpent man. Many world leaders and figureheads are controlled by the Dragon Lords, although most are unwilling and cannot resist their souls being astrally overlaid by the stronger wills of serpent people.

Serpent Astral Domination, a New Spell

Allows a serpent person to magically bind himself or herself within a target human, body and soul, and to take as much control as desired. Cost is 1 POW, plus a nightly sacrifice of human blood.

The caster obtains samples of the target's hair and nail clippings, and uses them and wild grass straw to construct a doll representing the target. The serpent person sacrifices 1 POW to the doll and begins a nightly ritual requiring a fresh human blood sacrifice equal to the target's SIZ, in which the the doll must be soaked.

The human target is approached in dreams nightly, with the defending human's player rolling POW against the attacker's POW on the Resistance Table. Success indicates that the human awakes from a ghastly nightmare involving snakes, dragons, and other serpentine horrors, but only loses sleep for his or her troubles. If the serpent person wins, the victim loses 1 POW, and 1 Sanity point for the vivid dreams. This process continues nightly until the victim has lost all but 1 POW; then the serpent person sacrifices a second point of POW and binds himself into the body of the victim, easily dominating the prostrate soul.

For those who can see auras or perceive the invisible spirit world, the hulking but ghostly form of a serpent person nine feet tall can be seen superimposed over the physical form of the human. Victims under nightly attack of the Astral Domination spell are seen to have a horrifying astral hunter attached to them (see the illustration on page 249). To those who cannot discern auras, something is still "not right" about these individuals. Some possessed seem to take on serpentine-like facial features while others are recognizable by the impression of cold emotionless reptilian eyes staring out of an otherwise human face. Witnesses observing the possessed astral form take a 0/1D6 Sanity loss.

While the target is under possession, the serpent person's original body stays comatose, but the serpent person's consciousness may move instantly between the two bodies. When away from the victim, the lifeless soul of the human may be instructed to sleep, perform simple tasks, and so on.

Unlike the spell Consume Likeness, the target of Serpent Astral Domination may be of any SIZ, there may be only one human possessed, and the shadow cast is the ordinary one for the human.

Notable Mythos Artifacts

The Dragon Lords hold in their possession several treasures connected with the true origins of the Japanese race. Chief among the possessions of the highest rank are ancient factual copies of the *Shinwa Tōzen*, a book detailing the true origins of the Japanese disguised within mythic allegory. If at any point the need should arise, the Dragon Lords have laid plans to access the three Imperial Regalia, Mirror, Sword, and Jewel, in their secret hiding places and secretly replace them with carefully crafted copies.

Current Goals and Projects

The Dragon Lords wish to place either a serpent-possessed human or a serpent person wrapped in illusionary human form in every position of power in the world. With the exception of key members of the imperial family, most of the Japanese leadership of politicians and bureaucracy are already compromised. The Dragon Lords have made great headway into other countries as well; wherever large multinational Japanese corporations hold sway, Dragon Lords are on the scene colonizing the leaders of the local nationality.

The Dragon Lords' primary purpose with Unit 731 and Yotsubishi/Pii-Mech is to restore the serpent people to their position as the dominant race on Earth. However, the old serpent race is not able to survive in as many diverse climates and habitats as humans. In short, the environment of Earth today is hostile to the serpent race in all but select regions near the equator. A fundamental change in the biological makeup of the serpent people is necessary for them to quickly regain supremacy. There are too few of the old serpent race to evolve and many of those have fallen into a degenerate state. As mankind's own hubris with cloning and inter-species gene splicing is rapidly changing from science fiction to fact, the Dragon Lords see bio-technology as the ultimate twist of fate: Humans now possess the very technology that inadvertently destroyed the ancient Muvians. Genetic engineering will be used right under human scientists' collective noses to create, from the human genome, a race of superior and highly adaptable serpent people. It is the aim of the hybrid program to find a genetic means to blend the superior traits and racial memory of the serpent folk with the adaptability and resilience of the human race.

When this primary goal is achieved, The Dragon Lords plan to initiate the second stage of the plan. A variant of the flu virus with the modified DNA and RNA code inserted will act as an airborne vector. The delivery system will be distributed over all major population centers on Earth, via an aerosol. The genetic change will alter the human genome after victims have an unusually bad case of the flu. Inserted into the human population's DNA, the human-serpent hybrid DNA will lie dormant until a human couple procreate. Then the engineered DNA will fundamentally change the genome of the embryo. The baby will be born and appear a normal human child until puberty when the adolescent will rapidly exhibit its actual racial phenotype. If the Dragon Lords' plans are successful, then in one generation of births, *Homo serpens* will replace *Homo sapiens* as the dominant species on Earth.

Some believe testing of the second stage delivery system is already in effect as evidenced by the "chem-trail" phenomenon found all over the Earth in recent years. This is highly possible as the astral serpents control the minds and bodies of many of the world's governmental leaders.

Yig and his mother may well be enraged at all this tinkering, and bring about Mappo. They rarely "say" much, either by way of approval or disapproval, to this group of supplicants. So far, the Dragon Lords haven't done anything drastic or successful enough to incur the wrath of the Great Old Ones, who watch current events disinterestedly, if at all. But from the viewpoint of the Dragon Lords, silence is unspoken approval. They feel they must be going in the right direction.

In recent news is a rash of *Hin-no-maru* slayings. Hin-no-maru is the symbol of the modern Japanese flag—a white field with a perfect red circle in the middle. The slain were draped in white sheets with their blood forming a perfect red circle on each sheet. The dead were from all walks of life; there were even a few foreigners. Japanese police have found no discernible pattern in the slayings. All those who were killed in this manner exhibited the ability to perceive the normally invisible auras around people, or were able to pierce illusionary magics. These unfortunates were able to see astrally possessed leaders for what they really were, or were able to see the true forms of serpent people.

One of the Dragon Lord Elders, known simply as the Oyabun, has a continuing side pursuit: Project Yûrei. In addition to running Yakuza-held interests in Kyoto, the Oyabun owns controlling stock in Yotsubishi Securities through dummy corporations. The elder acts as its reclusive president by using computer generated puppets in teleconferences. Few if any in that organization are aware of the president's true identity. To the cunning Oyabun, Project Yûrei, a division of Yotsubishi, is no threat to the Dragon Lords' goals as long as it is held close to the breast. He allows the Project to do what it will unchecked but monitors all incoming information to see if it offers any advantage toward his goals. He also has moles inside the Project to confiscate anything of value. To the Oyabun, Project Yûrei is a useful information resource not normally available via underworld ties.

The serpent race is stirring. After millennia in hibernation they are beginning to awaken. There is a feeling of electricity in the air. The awakening of The Great Dragon of Mappo, Mappo no Ryûjin, is expected in the near future. The "mother" of Yig and the group oversoul of the serpent race, this massive creature has been glimpsed in the midst of violent thunderstorms recently and is of almost unimaginable proportions. Commonly it looks like the classical Asian dragon: pale white in color and snake-like in form, twisting through the clouds, with only small parts of it visible at any one time. If the creature were to fully manifest in this realm, which the Dragon Lords are earnestly trying to bring about through spells and rituals, its volume would easily fill the sky and the vision of the viewer.

Viewing a thousand-foot-long ghostly white form snaking through the sunny sky is unsettling, to say the least. Witnesses lose 1D3/1D10 Sanity points. If the Dragon Kings, heaven forbid, ever succeed in awakening the Great Old One Mappo no Ryûjin, the mother of all serpents, witnesses lose 1D10/1D100 Sanity points. (See the monster entry on pages 255–257 for more details.)

DRAGON LORDS, Heralds of the Empire of the Golden Sun

char.	*Serpents*	*Dragon Lords*	*Dragon Kings**
STR	3D6	3D6	3D6
CON	3D6	3D6	3D6
SIZ	3D6	3D6	3D6
INT	3D6	3D6+2	3D6+6
POW	3D6	2D6+4	2D6+6
DEX	3D6	2D6+4	2D6+6
APP	3D6	3D6	N/A
HP	10–11	10–11	10–11

All: Move 8

Av. Damage Bonus: none.

**Dragon Kings are serpent people.*

Weapon: Katana 50%, 1D10+db*

**May be coated with POT 14 poison.*

9mm Auto 50%, 1D10*

**May be equipped with a silencer (range is halved, successful Listen roll is required to hear gunshot).*

Bite 35%, damage 1D8+poison*

**Dragon Kings only. POT equals the serpent person's CON.*

DRAGON LORD "SERPENT"

Armor: Humans, 1-point leather jackets or 5-point light kevlar vests; Dragon Kings, 1 point scales.

Spells: Oyabun Dragon Lords often possess 1D4 spells and Dragon King leaders (serpent people) possess 2D6 spells. Serpent people are likely to have the spells Consume Likeness or Astral Domination among those that they know.

Skills:

- Serpents—Bushidô 11%, Climb 40%, Conceal 57%, Cthulhu Mythos 01%, Cultural Etiquette 25%, Dodge 40%, Drive Auto or Motorbike 45%, Fast Talk 40%, Hide 40%, Jump 31%, Listen 40%, Lore (Shinto) 10%, Martial Arts (choose one) 50%, Persuade 58%, Psychology 40%, Sneak 62%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 55%, Urban Navigation 27%, Zoku (Yakuza) 25%, others as appropriate.
- Dragon Lords—Accounting 30%, Bargain 51%, Bushidô 49%, Conceal 50%, Corporate Culture 47%, Credit Rating 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Cultural Etiquette 50%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 57%, Law 20%, Listen 30%, Lore (Shinto) 20%, Martial Arts (choose one) 50%, Occult 09%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 45%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 50%, Zoku (Bosozoku, Chimpira, or Yankee) 45%, Zoku (Yakuza) 50%, others as appropriate.
- Dragon Kings—Accounting 40%, Bargain 60%, Bushidô 62%, Conceal 55%, Corporate Culture 59%, Credit Rating 76%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Cultural Etiquette 68%, Fast Talk 65%, Law 37%, Lore (Shinto) 35%, Martial Arts (choose one) 50%, Library Use 85%, Occult 15%, Persuade 71%, Psychology 55%, Sneak 70%, Zoku (Bosozoku, Chimpira, or Yankees) 60%, Zoku (Yakuza) 65%, others as appropriate.

Sanity Loss: None to see human members; 0/1D6 Sanity point loss to see a Dragon King.

Combat: All are armed with illegal weapons, favoring poison-coated katanas and silenced guns, and all will throw disposable gang members at opponents. Only the most powerful of Dragon Lords will take on opposition alone. More comfortable in groups, they prefer to hide in plain sight and use expendable thugs to do their fighting. If encountered on a mission too sensitive for non-members, a Dragon Lord will be surrounded by 3–8 Serpents, initiated street toughs, who will protect their oyabun with their life. Likewise, Dragon Kings, unless incognito, will always try to have at least two Dragon Lord escorts and a dozen Serpent bodyguards. When protecting a Dragon King in human guise, Serpents appear to be well-dressed professional bodyguards.

Dragon Lord members are human except for the uppermost leadership. This does not mean any individual member is less dangerous, though. Each lower ranked member of the Dragon Lords is chosen from a snake pit, the worst of the worst of the gangs and Yakuza that operate in Japan. They are smart, cruel, and without exception deadly.

Attacks and Special Effects: Constant blood rites and worship of Yig give human members of this group certain benefits as they rise in rank within the organization. Most members have a high resistance to snake poisons and the older members talk to and use snakes as spies. To this end the organization has found serpent poison a very suitable tool.

* YOTSUBISHI SECURITIES INTERNAL DOCUMENT *

* PROJECT YÛREI WHITE PAPER *

* INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION ONLY! VIOLATORS WILL BE CRIMINALLY PROSECUTED! *

OFFICIAL PROJECT YÛREI OPERATIONS POLICY: THE DRAGON LORDS

Encounters with Dragon Lord members are hazardous and their motives are as yet unfathomable. They possess supernatural abilities and the very fabric of their organization broadcasts a non-human philosophy. Foreign Project staff are advised to exercise extra caution as their lives might well be in peril because of simple face-to-face contact. Careful but discreet observation is called for. Involvement in criminal activities in the course of investigation can lead to termination of employment.

Internal Security Assessment Division
Yotsubishi Securities International
Kitty Sanrio

Project Yûrei
(Pu-ro-je-ku-to Yûrei)

I find it interesting that in the fifty years of this organization nobody once has thought about the practical uses of ectoplasmic energy to harness as a natural resource, until now. The use of these arcane spells we have acquired from various occult books seems to have no actual physical effect, nonetheless they appear to create significant and repeatable power spikes on our equipment. If my esteemed colleges will look at page 88 of your report, you will see what my proposed molecular plasmic inducer is projected to achieve.

[Truncated in the interest of space; goes on another fifty paragraphs.]

—Prof. Mari Makoto to assembled Psi-Mech Board, *Project Yûrei White Paper*

Aliases: The Project, Project Ghost, YSI, Yotsubishi Securities International.

Organization Type: Scientific research division of a multinational conglomerate, Yotsubishi Heavy Industries.

Estimated Membership: 5,000 regular staffers, 460 tech staff including archeologists, biochemists, ectoplasmetricists, material science engineers, medical doctors, metallurgists, nanotech specialists, research scientists, trans-physicalists, toxicologists, and physicists.

Threat Assessment: Only rogue field teams pose any threat as all fall low strict company guidelines.

Holdings and Interests: Project Yûrei is a special research division of Yotsubishi Securities International which in turn has a parent company of Yotsubishi Heavy Industries. Though not in direct control of anything besides the Tokyo headquarters and various small city offices located within other Yotsubishi subsidiaries, Project Yûrei staff can gain access to needed equipment or resources by going through proper corporate management channels. The worldwide holdings of the parent company, Yotsubishi Heavy Industries, are in almost every conceivable consumer market. This is a formidable resource indeed.

Capital Assets: Project Yûrei is allowed a budget of 10 trillion yen annually ($1 billion US), with 85% funneled directly to Psi-Mech Division.

Headquarters: The main headquarters of Project Yûrei are located in the bottom sub-levels of the forty-five-story Yotsubishi corporate headquarters in downtown Tokyo, Shinjuku Ward. These sub-levels afford Project Yûrei staff the space and relative safety they require for conducting occult research and supernatural experimentation. In addition, as a security bonus to the Project and the various priceless tomes they possess, the main offices of Yotsubishi Securities International are located just above them.

Known History: Project Yûrei is the offspring of Yotsubishi Heavy Industries' dabbling in the occult during the war years of the 1930s and 1940s. Back then, YHI was part of a zaibatsu that functioned as part of the industrial war machine for the militaristic colonial Japanese. Called Division 108, Yotsubishi staff tried to collect and utilize arcane artifacts to the benefit of the war effort, and did so more effectively than the Thule Society was able to do in the West for Hitler's Germany.

Many spectacular failures ended up laying waste to peasant rice fields, but the spirit of the project remained even though the Allied Occupation Forces dismantled the war machine and the many wartime zaibatsu. Division 108 researchers, haunted by the strange and unexplainable things they saw as young men, quietly formed a friendly discussion group in the 1950s, which quickly developed into a hidden passion. When a covert experiment with a spell went awry and consequently destroyed the entire private hangar of the vice president of Yotsubishi, the shareholders demanded a meeting with these misfits.

They couldn't easily fire them *en masse* because the scientists and engineers were some of the company's brightest. With no option but tact, the shareholders called them to task, and the group of scientists openly admitted what they had been doing in their spare time. But before the shareholders could act punitively, the scientists outlined the possible profits if such energies were properly harnessed. Shareholder interest piqued, the scientists petitioned for a special research and development project to accommodate their aspirations. Dubbed *Project Yûrei* in 1963, this R&D team has carefully researched and analyzed supposed mystical artifacts and sought to tap occultic energies as the power source of the future. Today Project Yûrei is a quiet leader in the almost-unguessed-at fields of occult archeology, ectoplasmetrics, trans-physicalism, and parapsychology.

Theme: Project Yûrei has an atmosphere of professional science. With the exception of the lab technical experts, who tend to be eccentric, it would be hard to distinguish the Project offices from those of any other Japanese office. Many younger staffers are very eager and energetic about their jobs and believe that what they are doing is beneficial to humanity. People in the Project are very open-minded; they even could be considered internationally cosmopolitan and perhaps too liberal to be Japanese.

Indoctrination: No formal indoctrination, but older Project staffers tend to look for promising young individuals, highly talented or gifted in one or more areas, who are also capable of working within a group setting. Loners are not encouraged.

Hierarchy: Based upon the classic Japanese office management model, young staffers must do less than glamorous drudge duty for five to ten years. Further, new staffers are rotated every one to two years into a new position in the Project to learn the ropes in as many areas as possible and further maximize their productive value as employees. Brilliant staffers are encouraged not to flaunt their ability but rather to help the less able members of the section so the group as a whole succeeds, not any one member. After five to ten years, staffers may be promoted to *kacho*, section chief, in charge of a section of eight to ten staffers.

If a tech-staffer, the position is referred to as research team leader. Above this is *bûcho*, a director, who is in charge of a division or several sections. These bûcho are organized into a committee which meets weekly to report on progress, take suggestions, and propose new directions for the Project.

Leadership: Once a month, a rotating chairman representing the Project committee attends the general shareholder's meeting along with a representative from the CEO of each subsidiary of Yotsubishi Heavy Industries. The president of the company never attends these meetings personally but uses tele-presence. No one of the current staff has seen the president, but it is said he is a rather old and frail bed-ridden man who inherited the position from his father in the

1930s. Since the president uses a computer generated face, no one can tell for sure.

Doctrine/Dogma: Due to the many mishaps in pre-Project days, present day Project staffers follow strict procedural guidelines laid out by the founding researchers of Project Yûrei. To take shortcuts or breach these is to risk termination of employment and systematic stripping and discrediting of credentials, guaranteeing no corporate espionage or leaks of Project secrets after termination. The research goals of the Project are to expand the knowledge and horizons of mankind by making that which is hidden, the occult, clear and understandable—the turning of magic into science.

Common M.O.: Excursions to remote locales are a common occurrence for field operators who must investigate any promising lead to acquire an occult item or knowledge. Field teams are always at least a pair, with the ideal size being four staffers. Each staffer represents a field of expertise required for the mission to which he or she is assigned. Project Yûrei will go to great lengths to accomplish a mission but they won't blatantly break the law in the process. Nonetheless, kachos have been known to turn a blind eye to seriously bending the law if the results are profitable.

YOTSUBISHI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

Unconfirmed Rumors: In any such organization rumors fly this way and that, but the chief persistent rumors tend to be the following.

- Who the president really is.
- The existence of a secret cabal of rogue Project researchers—everybody suspects someone else is a member of it.
- What's being held in Containment Block 3A.

Secret History

In the history of Project Yûrei there has always been a small secret cabal of quasi-sorcerers at the core of the organization, driving it along in a quest for greater knowledge. This may sound sinister, but it should be noted that in the 1930s and 40s, while their German brothers of the Thule Society actively sought religious and mystical artifacts to enhance the temporal powers of their leader, Unit 108 was bumbling along, going through the motions of the same mission, but more than a little ignorant as to what might result. To put it plainly, scientists of this group often don't know the trouble they are getting themselves into until an experimental ritual backfires. Throughout their history they have tried to reverse-engineer the occult and its ethereal energies to yield practical consumer products, something that just can't be done. To be sure, they have had limited success, but they probably unleashed more upon this world than did the most dangerous cults listed in this section. The hundreds of Mythos volumes possessed by Project Yûrei should give one pause as to what havoc these well-meaning souls will ultimately wreak.

Portrayal of the inner cadre of researchers should include a fair mix of deadening old fools who haven't the slightest clue as to what in Yomi they are messing with. Tales still circulate of the alleged summoning and binding of a nightgaunt so that Project researchers could study how it took. There is a small contingent of highly competent sorcerer-scientists, but the general tendency for them is to steal ideas and valuable items acquired by the Project for their own private purposes. Perhaps the biggest problem with Project Yûrei is that the Project's staff quests for truth and pure morality and ethics as lesser priorities. Many lab researchers would fit the mold of the cold emotionless scientist.

There is one secret in Project Yûrei that only a privileged few know: The president of Yotsubishi Heavy Industries is actually an elder of the secret society called the Dragon Lords. The enigmatic figure known only as The Oyabun keeps tabs on all of the Project's activities through a network of loyal spies planted inside the Project. Though he rarely intercedes, those who do know or suspect his involvement wisely keep their speculations to themselves. Project staff have been known to disappear when they looked too closely into this particular mystery.

On a yet darker note, there is a division within the Project whose labors are highly distressing. This Psi-Mech Division operates at its own facilities in Osaka, and is equipped with the some of the most advanced technology known today. Supposedly answerable to the Project via the chain of command, Psi-Mech is answerable in reality only to the mysterious president of Yotsubishi Industries. Trillions of yen disappear into this division every year. What can be said for sure is that staff from this division use the magical knowledge that the Project discovers to fuel their research into super-science.

By combining magic with cutting edge human technology, Psi-Mech has reached a level of advancement perhaps only seen among

the alien races or in humanity's ancient past. Few investigators penetrate far into this secretive organization as its cyborg enforcers and cybernaut vehicles deal harshly with interlopers. For further details on Psi-Mech, see pages 200–205.

Mythos Associations

Over the years, Project Yûrei has often stumbled across major aspects of the Mythos, including a disastrous encounter with Cthulhu. The keeper is free to include any background knowledge of the Mythos he thinks appropriate, but should keep in mind that Mythos knowledge is mostly catalogued and rarely utilized by this group except to expand its knowledge base. Project Yûrei's Mythos associations conceivably can be used to provide a welcome break in the tension by the darkly humorous results of their research escapades. Despite the many outright hazardous dealings that the Project has had with Mythos beings, and the grisly loss of occasional staffers, the group as a whole has escaped relatively unscathed. Perhaps Project Yûrei has an amused patron among the Elder Gods or Great Old Ones; speculation as to who or what that may be is left to the keeper.

Notable Mythos Artifacts

- Partial *Book of Eibon* (1/3 book), sixth century, Chinese translation.
- A variant of the Glass of Leng.
- *Forbidden Sutra (Jinji Fèjing)*, sixth century, partially damaged, classical Mandarin Chinese translation on fossilized tortoise shells.
- *Kita Zoshi*, one of the four parts of the *Jigoku Zoshi*, complete scroll.
- *Shinwa Taizen*, crumbling copy of sixteenth century Japanese edition.
- *Nameless Cults*, 1845 edition.
- *Project Yûrei White Paper*, updated annually.
- *Secret Mysteries of Asia*, written by Gottfried Mulder.
- *Supernaturalia Japonica*, by Lafcadio Hearn, one of three known surviving handwritten manuscripts.

Current Goals and Projects

- High among the Project's current priorities is discovering the nature of the ruins of a sunken city found near Naha City, which is located in the Pacific Island prefecture of Okinawa, 500 miles south of Honshu. Speculations are that it could be a Muvian city, part of Mu, or even the fabled R'lyeh.
- Project Yûrei is actively collecting data on the various cults listed in this section and around the world. Paternalistically, they see themselves as somehow protecting the general populace from the threat by investigating it.
- The investigation into the murder of the previous Project director remains open. The culprits' identities and motives are still unclear.
- In the course of occult experiments, the Project has gained several interesting by-products. These are kept in mystically and physically sealed chambers deep in the Project complex. There have been a few unfortunate deaths when these things have broken free. Certain researchers have grasped this rare opportunity to see what technologies can be extracted from these mystical mishaps. One successful endeavor has resulted in the development of an angstrom cannon that harnesses ectoplasmic material from the astral plane to stun targets. Currently, however, the prototype is bolted to the floor and weighs in at ten tons.
- Currently the Quantum Trans-dimensional Research and Development Division (QT R&D) has been using quantum theory combined with rituals in an attempt to create permanent and reproducible portals to other dimensions.

PROJECT YÛREI STAFF, Bureaucrats with Exotic Weapons

The average staff employee of the Project is comparable to most investigators in ability. Notable differences being that the staffer's first language is Japanese; the rare foreign staffer must be fluent so that he or she can work smoothly with the group as a whole. Staffers are also team players and are expected to bring one special talent or ability to aid the stated mission of the Project.

Tech staffers are much like a scientific priesthood and pretty much are a closed society. They are vital to the Project, so perhaps justifiably they put on an air of arrogance to the regular staffers. There are also a fair number of lunatics among this group.

char.	*rolls*	*averages*
STR	3D6	10–11
CON	3D6	10–11
SIZ	3D6	10–11
INT	3D6	minimum 13
POW	3D6	minimum 13
DEX	3D6	10–11
APP	3D6	10–11
Move 8		HP 10–11

Av. Damage Bonus none.

Weapons: Taser Gun 35%, damage 5d6+ *variant*

"Examples of non-lethal (yet) secret weapons of exotic design and function include:

Neural Disruptor, paralysis for 1D6 rounds.

Ethereal Snare, confusion for 1D10 rounds.

Psychometric Stasis, hypersensation for 1D6 rounds.

Hydrostatic Lock, faint for 1D10 rounds.

Psychic Sonic Generator, Blocks all ESP use for 1D6 rounds.

Armor: 2-point carbon fiber lab coats or 5-point kevlar vests.

Spells: At the discretion of the keeper. Tech staffers occasionally have 1D4 spells at their command.

Skills: Tech staffers have at least two science or technological skills (Astronomy, Chemistry, Computer Use, Electrical Repair, Electronics, Mechanical Repair, Natural History, Physics, etc.) at 60% or better, and Occult 30% or better. Sanity points are characteristically below 50, and Cthulhu Mythos 12% or higher is not uncommon. Others as appropriate, especially Corporate Culture 40+%, Library Use 50+% and/or Spot Hidden 50+%.

Sanity Loss: Possible when witnessing the Project zomes or its menageries. Being witness to rituals performed in the process of research is another danger to one's sanity.

Scroll Three, Section Four

A trio of investigators deals with a minor Mythos manifestation.

SECTION FOUR:

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

People of import.

First impressions best serve the weak-minded.
—the Black Monk, *The Mysterious Path.*

サド・アイエ・アーゲンシー

Third Eye Agency
(SADO-AIE-AY-GEN-SHII)

Taro Watanabe

Taro Watanabe is an Associate Professor of Parapsychology at Tokyo University ("Todai"). Despite this exalted academic status, he is something of an outcast for his radical theories and unorthodox research methods, and for this Todai politely considers him to be on permanent sabbatical. But that hasn't stopped this fluent speaker of English, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese from pursuing his research.

Spending most of his mental energies on solving supernatural mysteries, Taro's appearance is not much to admire. He favors tan elbow-patched blazers and nylon slacks. With a bowl-cut crop of hair and a face framed by thick coke-bottle glasses for his weak eyes, he is not too dashing in the looks department either.

His drive to unmask the hidden may be prompted by his descent from a long line of Shingon sect Buddhist priests. When Watanabe was quite young, his father died in a freak accident shortly after acquiring a strange book. The tome was mysteriously stolen after his father's funeral. Taro has spent half his life looking for this work, based only on his vague memories of it as a child. Raised by his mother, his only father figure was his uncle, a priest at Kosanji Temple in Kyoto. Due to his fractured family life, Taro is not the most social person and often prefers musty old books and confronting spirits to the social foibles of ordinary people.

TARO WATANABE

As a co-founder of Third Eye Agency, a self-proclaimed paranormal investigation group, Taro Watanabe is kept quite busy. He does most of the background research for the firm's cases, because his training and experience have left him a walking encyclopedia of paranormal phenomena in Japan.

TARO WATANABE, Age 29, Passionate Investigator of the Unknown

STR 08	CON 10	SIZ 09	INT 18	POW 16
DEX 10	APP 09	EDU 24	SAN 68	HP 10

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Iron-shod Buddhist Staff 40%, damage 1D6

Spells: Bless Blade, Dream Vision, Sutra of Exorcism.

Skills: Archaeology 35%, Anthropology 55%, Astrology 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 09%, Computer Use 65%, Credit Rating 50%, English 85%, Hide 20%, History 65%, Library Use 85%, Meditate 40%, Other Language (Kobû Japanese) 45%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 80%, Own Language 75%, Occult 85%, Parapsychology 92%, Psychology 45%, Psychometry* 32%, Shingon Buddhism 51%, Supernatural Trivia 45%.

* *See "Optional Rules: Psychic Abilities" on page 199.*

Ryoma Miyamoto

For many years, Miyamoto was content as an inspector of criminal investigation on the Tokyo police force. He had his fair share of problems at work and at home with his wife Yukiko, but his life took a dark turn when she was murdered. Her death began to haunt him, quite literally. Yukiko's restless spirit continues to demand that he find her killers. This tragedy sapped his formerly solid sanity and in only two years, after over fifteen on the force, failure at his yearly psychological evaluation forced his retirement. He was so frayed that even his close friend and boss on the force, Police Chief Shinji Fujiyama, couldn't save Ryoma's career. The clincher for the chief was when

Miyamoto was seen on several occasions talking aloud and even arguing with himself.

Miyamoto tends to wear the gray trench coat his wife gave him on their twentieth anniversary. Like most Japanese men who are stressed, he smokes prodigiously. Already in his late forties, his tightly cropped black hair is peppered with white at the temples. He is a handsome man, bearing a remarkable resemblance to the Japanese movie star Ken Takura *(Black Rain, Mr. Baseball)*.

The Miyamoto name descends from the family line of the legendary swordsman who wrote *The Book of the Five Rings*. Ryoma's family prides itself on martial prowess with iaido, sword drawing, and kendo, sword fencing. Many in the family cash in on this reputation and run full-time training dojos in these arts. Ryoma Miyamoto is a master in both forms, and in his spare time he used to teach kendo to young police recruits.

The other co-founder of Third Eye Agency, Miyamoto spends a great deal of his energy in this endeavor. It reminds him of his old profession as a police officer. He lends his keen deductive skills and street savvy to the team. His personal time he divides between running his dojo and looking into his wife's murder.

RYOMA MIYAMOTO

YUKIKO MIYAMOTO

RYOMA MIYAMOTO, Age 46, Hard-Boiled Paranormal P.I.

STR 15	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 14	POW 15
DEX 14	APP 13	EDU 15	SAN 50	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: 9mm Revolver 60%, damage 1D10
Katana 85%, damage 1D10+1D4.
Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3+1D4.

Armor: 2 points of sewn-in kevlar mesh in gray trench coat.

Skills: Bargain 40%, Bushidô 58%, Cthulhu Mythos 03%, Credit Rating 70%, Cultural Etiquette 45%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 75%, Handgun 60%, Hide 40%, Martial Arts (Kendo/Iaido) 85%, Listen 45%, Occult 35%, Persuade 68%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Sneak 45%, Track 30%, Urban Navigation 65%, Zoku (Yakuza) 25%, Zoku (Boseizoku) 35%.

yukiko miyamoto

In life, Yukiko Miyamoto was a normal housewife. If she had any outstanding flaw, it was being a little overprotective of her husband. But that was understandable considering his line of work as a police investigator. The most heart-rending episode in her life was when she found out she was barren, perhaps because she was a child of a family living on the outskirts of Hiroshima.

One night intruders broke into the house, looking for evidence from a bizarre murder case her husband Ryoma had taken home. Three cultists, finding her at home and no evidence, drugged and tortured Yukiko to death while interrogating her about the missing evidence. So traumatic and senseless was her death that Yukiko's spirit quickly reformed as a yûrei, seeking vengeance.

As a yûrei she is invisible to people for the most part, unless she chooses to be seen. Because the emotional bond is strong between her and Ryoma, she can appear to him at no cost to her POW.

While Yukiko is dead and she can now see and communicate with other beings in the ethereal, her love for her husband prevents her from becoming the forgetful and tragic creature most yûrei are. When her husband dies, she will lose her last link to the living and become a danger to all around her as her memories of her purpose fade.

Yukiko can manifest in one of three images: as a beautiful and pristine image of herself dressed in a white burial kimono; as a hovering and glowing ball like a kitsune-bi; and in her true form—the actual state of her rotting and decayed corpse, which becomes progressively more horrifying as time passes.

YUKIKO MIYAMOTO, Yûrei (Disembodied Spirit)

INT 15 POW 15
APP 15 (pristine w/o Death Mask)

As a yûrei, Yukiko has no physical attributes.

Special Attacks: when Yukiko attacks, she appears to claw at a target, leaving red streaking welts on the target's skin. She can drain 1D6 POW with a successful Resistance Table attack, but if she loses such a contest she loses 1D6 POW. Drained of all POW, she will dissipate, then re-form after seven days.

Armor: none, but as an immaterial being she is immune to all physical weapons except enchanted ones.

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 13%, Cultural Etiquette 55%, Listen 31%, Occult 27%, Spot Hidden 39%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8 Sanity points to see Yukiko in her horrible death mask visage.

Sachiko Musha-no-koji

SACHIKO MUSHA-NO-KOJI

The tender age of this twenty-two year old woman belies the trials she has undergone in her short life, ordeals more harrowing than those experienced by people four times her age. Sachiko is an itako, a Shinto shamaness who channels spirits, acting as a physical receptacle for kami and the dead, as well as predicting the future.

Though her family name, Musha-no-Koji, is an old one, traceable back to Prince Shotoku's Heian Era, Sachiko barely knew her family. She was taken from her true family at puberty to live in a conclave of blind old seers in Aomori Prefecture. This place was a haven for blind virgin soothsayers, the female itako. For ten years she lived in this community and was trained in the old ways, customs practiced when Japan was still a matriarchal society ruled by female shamans.

The best among itako, those with sharp second sight, are blind. Young girls who "become" itako around age thirteen

when contacted by kami aren't necessarily blind but they find that their vision rapidly deteriorates to the point that at the age of twenty-five, they are clinically blind. This ailment is complimented by a prematurely aged body with the countenance of a forty year old woman.)

Quiet and soft spoken by nature, the five-foot-tall woman is always attired in the spotless bleach-white kimono and flame-red hakama skirt of a Shinto shrine maiden. Within the voluminous folds of her kimono she conceals various gofu wards, ema talismans and a gohei. On her neck is a string of jade magatama, traditional Shinto ritual jewels. Having lived with grim old women most of her life, she has no concept of humor. That, and the fact that the initiate test as an itako is to foresee one's own death, has also dampened her sense of fun.

Her one eccentricity may be an obsession with cleanliness and her personal appearance. This may be due to the tenets of her religion, but it can be quite uncomfortable to witness at times.

She joined the Third Eye Agency about two years after Ryoma and Taro had started it. When asked by the pair why she had come, she simply stated that she had heard a call that she was needed at the agency. Skeptical at first, her partners understood her usefulness after early cases featured masterful displays of her skills with spirits. The itako has an excellent rapport with Ryoma's dead wife Yukiko, whom she can see and talk to directly.

Optional Rule: Psychic Abilities

Psychic abilities are recommended for use as non-player character abilities. Their primary purpose is to generate story hooks, to create extra drama or to get an adventure moving again if investigators are stumped. Taro of the Third Eye Agency and Clark Sharpley are examples of non-player character psychics. Keepers should carefully consider whether to allow player characters to have psychic abilities, as psychic "super-investigators" could potentially undermine the sense of cosmic horror that is key to the *Call of Cthulhu* game.

If the keeper wishes to make psychic abilities available to investigators, there are two possibilities. One is to allow a player to choose one or more abilities during character creation. The second chance is to allow an investigator to develop one or more abilities following a severe mental/ psychological shock (suffering a head injury, losing 10+ SAN from a single incident, being temporarily possessed by a supernatural entity, etc.). Either way, choosing or gaining a psychic ability costs the investigator 1 POW per ability. (Psychics tend to be unstable because they experience things beyond most people's comprehension.)

If the keeper wishes, a character with psychic abilities may suffer one of the following severe side effects from the use of his or her power, or some other drawback of the keeper's devising. (In "Light and Shadow," Tama's psychometry power inflicts nausea as a side effect.)

- **Bleeding:** The use of psychic power induces wild fluctuations in blood pressure, causing the character to bleed from the nose and/or ears. (Roll CON x5 or take 1 point of damage; this damage heals normally.)
- **Extreme Discomfort:** Whenever the psychic ability activates, the character suffers painful headaches, severe nausea, or some other debilitating physical symptom. (Roll POW x5 or halve all skill percentile ratings, rounded down.)
- **Madness:** The character's expanded perception overloads his or her brain, triggering a short term bout of irrational behavior. (Roll POW x5 or make a roll on the Short Temporary Insanity Table in the core rules book.)

Only two psychic abilities are included here, Clairvoyance and Psychometry. A keeper who wants to expand on the idea of psychic powers will have to do so independently.

CLAIRVOYANCE (POW x2)

This ability enables an individual to see things that would normally be invisible, such as star vampires, astral serpents, ghosts, etc. It also allows an individual to perceive possession by outside entities such as shiva, and to penetrate illusions and supernatural disguises.

If invisible entities, entities possessing other beings, or supernatural illusion/disguise effects are within visual range, the keeper makes a secret Clairvoyance roll for each character with Clairvoyance. A success indicates that the character's power kicks in, and the character sees whatever is there in its true form. A failure means that the character fails to perceive anything out of the ordinary. Successful use of Clairvoyance costs the viewer 0/1 SAN; additional SAN loss may result from seeing Mythos entities or effects. A failed roll inflicts no SAN loss. (Note that this is an involuntary ability; the keeper, not the player, decides when to roll for it.) As with a successful skill roll, a successful Clairvoyance roll provides a clue.

PSYCHOMETRY (POW x2)

An individual with this ability can learn about objects and substances with a strong psychic "resonance" by touching them. Examples include objects with supernatural properties, such as a fragment of the Yonaguni Monuments or an Elder Sign. Also included are objects which were the focus of great emotion (a murder weapon, a ring with sentimental value for its wearer, etc.). Whenever a psychometric individual touches such an object with his or her bare skin, the keeper makes a Psychometry roll. An object with strong psychic "vibes," like a Yonaguni fragment, may provide a bonus to the roll, and may even be "readable" through a thin barrier, such as a glove or a layer of wrapping paper. (See "Light and Shadow," page 158.) On the other hand, an object with weak resonance (such as a knife that was used in a murder and hidden away for twenty years) may inflict a penalty to the roll.

A successful roll means that the psychic has a vision of events that involved or took place around the object or substance; this may include reliving the experiences of an individual who used it or was affected by it. The psychic has no control over what he or she sees or experiences; psychometric visions should be as clear or as murky as the keeper desires. The keeper should take care to ensure that a character with Psychometry does not derail the adventure by immediately solving any mystery involved.

Successful use of Psychometry costs the psychic 0/1 SAN; additional SAN loss may result depending on what the individual sees/experiences. A failed roll inflicts no SAN loss. (Note that this is an involuntary ability; the keeper, not the player, decides when to roll for it.) As with a successful skill roll, a successful Psychometry roll provides a clue.

SACHIKO MUSHA-NO-KOJI, Age 22, Shinto Shamaness

STR 08	CON 12	SIZ 07	INT 13	POW 19
DEX 13	APP 15	EDU 12	SAN 45	HP 10

Damage Bonus: –1D4.

Weapon: Gohei (Shinto Wand) 45%, damage 1D2–1D4.

Magic Item: Magarama necklace, +10 magic points.

Spells: Amaterasu's Gaze, Command Ghost, Contact Deity/Greater Kami, Create Charm, Detect Enchantment, Enchant Ink, Light of the Sun (August), Summon/Bind Lesser Kami.

Skills: Bargain 60%, Channeling 86%, Craft (Shrine Charms) 83%, Cthulhu Mythos 07%, Fast Talk 40%, Natural History 65%, Occult 80%, Own Language 85%, Persuade 75%, Psychology 35%, Religion (Shinto) 85%, Shôdô 58%, Spot Hidden 50%.

四菱・精神目釘

Yotsubishi Psi-Mech Division

Mari Makoto

Even as a child, she felt an affinity toward machines and the unseen over human interaction. It's perhaps for this reason that she gravitated toward engineering, usually a bastion for men. She excelled at her chosen vocation, though, and most Japanese men gave her grudging respect if not friendship. It was when her aunt died suddenly, with whom she was very close (most people mistook them for twins), that Makoto realized that there was more to the world than circuits and gears.

She withdrew as project leader of her company's research division and plunged into the world of the paranormal. She emerged four years later with a new degree in parapsychology and a desire to merge her two areas of expertise into a new science. She was a natural for Project Yûrei and specifically Psi-Mech. In the last five years, through diligent study and application of several archaic tomes in the Project's possession, she has made great progress. More than anyone else at the Project, she has been able to tap into the preternatural energies of the occult and harness them as a clean source of power for the next millennium. She views most paranormal phenomena as superstitious mumbo jumbo. She little realizes how dangerous her research truly is.

Professor Mari Makoto is a stunning Japanese woman in her mid-thirties who seems unaware of her beauty, but does nothing to mask it. Her long hair is often absently tied into a long ponytail and she favors tan tweed business suits.

PROFESSOR MARI MAKOTO, Age 35, Brilliant Parapsychologist and Mechanical Engineer

STR 09	CON 13	SIZ 08	INT 18	POW 15
DEX 12	APP 17	EDU 26	SAN 78	HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Spells: Enchant Ink, Summon/Bind Lesser Kami, Summon/Bind Yôkai, Create Yôkai, Spine of the Dragon.

Skills: Computer Use 55%, Corporate Culture 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 07%, Credit Rating 80%, Electrical Repair 88%, Electronics 90%, Library Use 58%, Lore (Shinto) 35%, Mechanical Repair 85%, Occult 60%, Operate Heavy Machine 25%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 85%, Persuade 48%, Physics 68%, Ultra-Tech Mechanical Repair 65%.

Mister Kuro

Ever since trying a new magical technique to summon yûrei for study, Mr. Kuro has been acting peculiar, locking himself in his office for days at a time. Everybody at Project Yûrei knew that Old Man Kuro was a bit touched in the head. Maybe he has finally gone senile.

Mr. Kuro was a brilliant pioneer of Project Yûrei, who should've retired a decade ago. As a founding father of the Yotsubishi division, however, he was allowed to continue private research under the title of senior researcher. This proved to be his undoing. He inadvertently summoned a powerful and dangerous onryô in a ritual botched due to his arthritis.

This black angel of death easily overcame him, consumed his soul, and took up residence in Kuro's frail old body. The onryô is not at all pleased with its fragile physical form. It is currently looking for a strong, healthy young body while it tries to maintain the deception that it is still the old Mr. Kuro. Previous to this, the onryô had been too weak to threaten anyone, forgotten as he was by the masses. This monster is the twisted and hateful spirit of the great Shôgun Taira-no-Masakado, whose severed head is interred in the famous tomb of Tokyo's Otemachi district.

For the observant, there are three flaws in the spirit's disguise. First, he tends to speak very archaic Japanese, almost the equivalent of Elizabethan English. Then there is the strange smell of Mr. Kuro's decaying body that he cannot completely hide away or mask. And his lack of modern knowledge and skills is such a give-away that he dares not emerge from Kuro's office during the work-day.

MISTER KURO, Age 80, Doddering Old Scientist and Embodied Onryô

STR 06	CON 06	SIZ 10	INT 17	POW 24
DEX 06	APP 05	EDU 13	HP 08	

Damage Bonus: –1D4.

Weapons: none.

Special Attacks*: Feeding, Essence Drain, Possession. The onryô has just acquired the old professor's body, the deterioration of which is little noticeable as yet. This will change as the body continues to rot. Mr. Kuro's body decomposes at the rate of –2 in STR, CON, SIZ, and DEX each month.

*For more details see the onryô monster entry on page 242.

Skills: Bushidô 85%, Cthulhu Mythos 23%, Fast Talk 50%, Hide 90%, History 25%, Own Language 92%, Occult 60%, Organize Cult 75%, Persuade 88%, Psychology 45%, Sneak 20%.

Sanity Loss: 1D4/1D8+2 Sanity points to see Mr. Kuro's true demonic form.

Rei/Agent Hachi-Rei, Bio-Morph

The ultimate achievement of Psi-Mech Division's experimentation, Agent Hachi-rei is a sight to behold, perhaps if only to see to what insane lengths this group will toil without regard to ethics.

Subject Hachi-rei, simply meaning "number 80" in Japanese, is the only name this hybrid creature has. All of its human identity was destroyed in meshing it with the living bio-armor of unknown origin Psi-Mech recovered. Hachi-rei has been implanted with false memories

that she is a simple university student named Rei. Actually, her human half is the result of the first known human cloning, also achieved by Psi-Mech. The original Rei is a young woman who lives in Fukuoka Prefecture. She is totally unaware that this abomination wears her face. The true Reiko Hamazaki is the daughter of a rich executive in the multinational corporation Niko, which manufactures the popular GameStation 2 console.

Rei's horrible transformation into her inhuman self is triggered via outside threat or when her operators transmit a subsonic signal. The bio-morph symbiont Hachi-rei then emerges, operating totally on raw instinct as a brutal killing machine. Each time this transmogrification occurs, Rei has no conscious recall of it, though later vestigial nightmares of such events still surface and chip away at Rei's Sanity (1D4 SAN loss). If Rei drops to zero sanity, her consciousness dissolves and she permanently changes into a merciless bio-mechanical terror, the Sanagi symbiont's mature form.

Hachi-rei represents a union of humankind and bio-machine achieved by the high priests of Japanese bio-technology. The most horrifying aspect of Rei is that she is merely a prototype for rapidly developing technology, not the end result. Rei, whose name means "zero" in Japanese, represents the dawn of the engineered human. Before this, her one remarkable achievement was to be the first accelerated-growth human clone—technically not a human being according to some, and therefore free of international rules regarding experimentation on humans.

Alarmingly, the bio-mech unit hasn't stopped evolving. Certain components are transforming into an unpredicted bio-mechanical fusion. (In fact, the dark god who surreptitiously granted the knowledge to Psi-Mech duped them in the hope of creating a new servitor race on Earth. Number 80 is the first of these beings. When Hachi-rei reaches its final form, it will begin to heed the will of its true creator.)

Hachi-rei represents a future dominated by the twisted alien technology of the Mythos. Many modern Japanese prefer cold and lifeless things to the unpredictability of other humans. To Psi-Mech, bio-morph technology is key to a new Japan. If Psi-Mech succeeds, Tokyo will be the technological center of of the East in the next decade and all the world will find its future pinned to the whims of Tokyo's elite bio-tech and cyber-tech power brokers.

REI, Apparent Age 20, True Age 2, Clone/Dormant Symbiont

STR 15	CON 12	SIZ 10	INT 10	POW 12
DEX 11	APP 11	EDU 05	SAN 55	HP 11

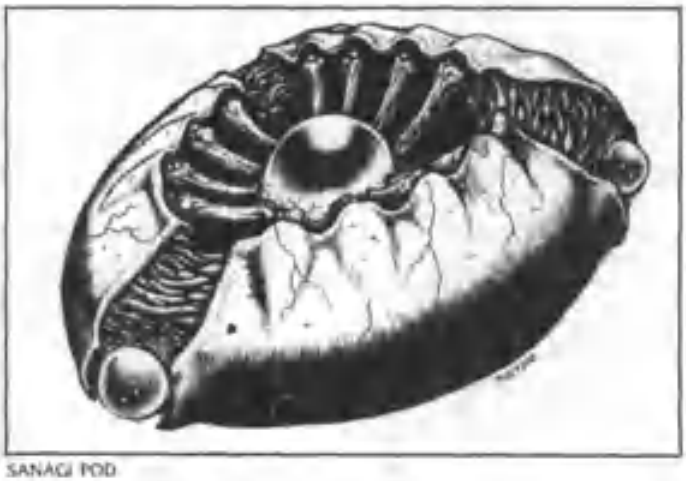
AGENT HACHI-REI, Bio-Morph Armor

STR 35	CON 20	SIZ 19	INT 10	POW 12
DEX 20	APP 0	HP 31		

Damage Bonus: +1D4 in human form; +2D6 in bio-morph form.

Armor: none in human form; in bio-morph form, 15 points of hardened chitin exoskeleton, +20 hit points (figured in, above), and bio-regenerates 1 HP per minute.

Weapons: Bio-Laser 35%, damage 1D6, 1 attack per 5 rounds
Ultra-Sonic Spurs 45%, damage 2D6, 2 attacks per round
Kinetic Cannon, damage 4D6, 1 attack per 10 rounds
Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3+1D4 (human form), 1D8+2D6 (bio-morph form)



SANAGI POD

Shoulder Tendrils (x8) 40%, damage 1D4 or grapple; see page 204.

Skills: Confusion 35% Climb 58%98%*, Dodge 40%, Hide 80%, Jump 65%, Sneak 60%, Martial Arts (Ninjutsu) 75%, Urban Navigation 35%, Zoku (High School) 58%.

**Each shoulder tendril adds +5 percentiles to Rei's Climb skill, up to a maximum of +40 percentiles.*

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 to see Hachi-Rei transform.

Comments: as Rei, the symbiont is dormant. Rei appears completely human. If attacked in human form, her human stats apply. Rei has no access to her enhanced stats until she bio-morphs into battle mode as Hachi-rei. She could perhaps die in a violent attack—her mind would believe her to be dead and psychosomatically make it so, forcing Rei into a deep coma. If Rei dies before morphing and the

SANAGI BIO-MORPH ARMOR

metallic control nexus survives intact, she quickly heals, with no memory of the incident. If the damage to her human body is significant, then the control medal quickly re-creates her body.

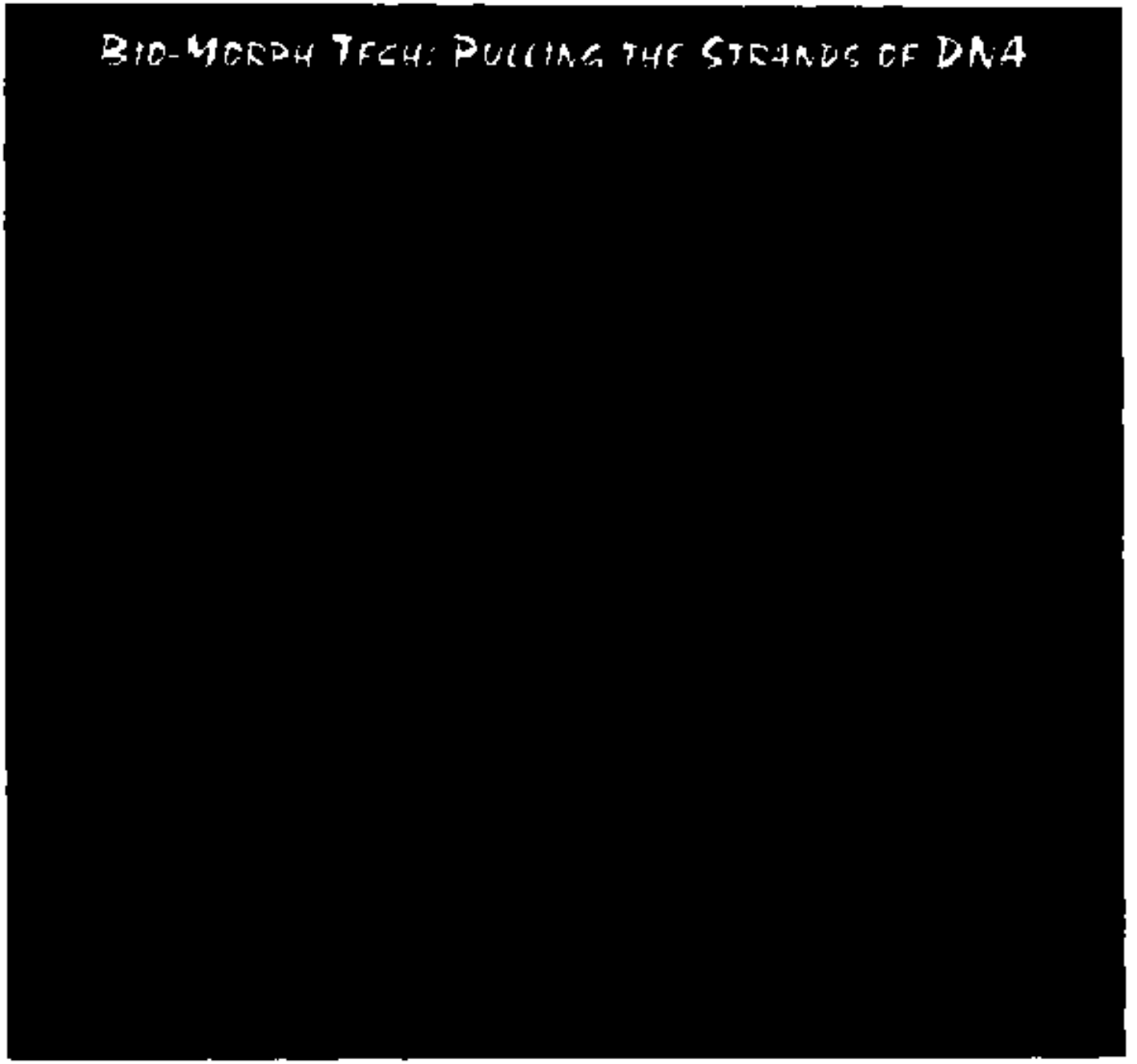
If Rei is able to react to an attack on her person, as an act of self preservation she may call for the transformation into Hachi-rei. Then the fibers of the symbiont threaded throughout her body instantly quadruple in size, increasing the tensile strength of her muscles and bones, and drastically altering her appearance.

Bio-morph armor is a biological machine. Energy of the natural human metabolism is efficiently hyper-accelerated and amplified by the alien life form—but chemical energy is a limited resource. The metallic control nexus mediates this consumption. The control nexus is of a radioactive alien metal that prevents the symbiont from horrifically consuming the host body in seconds.

Sanagi (sah-nah-ghe)

Sanagi is Japanese for pupa, in the sense of a butterfly's *(shell)* juvenile stage. The Psi-Mech scientists assigned to analyze a strange artifact found in the bizarre ruins of an ancient dig site in Hokkaido tired of the designation, "Quadrant #671-Alpha." They nicknamed it the "Sanagi Pod," which stuck. Little did they know how prophetic the term would be, for the Sanagi Pod is the pupa stage of a symbiont life form before joining with a host. The pod is instinctual and reactive. The addition of the human center allows the fused entity to evolve and thrive as a symbiont.

"Sanagi" is a term that also refers to Hachi-rei or anyone joined to this alien bio-technology. At the keeper's discretion, the Sanagi bio-morph could eventually evolve or transform into something totally beyond humanity. One possible Mythos influence could be the dedicated cultists of the Outer God Yidhra hidden within the bio-tech field worldwide. Their goal is to unlock the human genome and alter humanity into a race ready to take its place among the stars.



THE SANAGI POD, Alien Symbiont

STR 20	CON 20	SIZ 04
POW 05	DEX 15	HP 50

As an independent entity, the Sanagi Pod has 50 hit points. Joined with a humanoid host, it adds 20 hit points to the host.

The Sanagi bio-mechanical pod is the approximate shape and size of a sub-compact car tire. This pod, composed of a disk-shaped winding of fibrous purple tendrils wrapped around a central metallic globe, observably pulses and seethes with life. A reflective dome is centered in the middle and becomes the control nexus upon the final transformation into a symbiotic organism.

Symbiosis: When a humanoid comes close to the central metallic sense organ of the pod and is detected as having suitable genetic material, the potential host is targeted. Hundreds of pencil-thin purple tendrils wound around the central sphere suddenly spring forth from the pod to attack the host with the tensile strength of steel cables.

Each tendril has 1D4 hit points. If destroyed, it regrows in a round. Defending against this attack is nearly impossible: 50 points of damage must be inflicted upon the pod to destroy it within the two rounds in which melding occurs. (The pod does not have any armor at this time.)

The purplish tendrils are neural connections which burrow into the flesh of the host to reach the spinal cord and infiltrate every bone and muscle of his or her being. In the final stage of joining, the mass of tendrils thickens and covers the host completely to harden into a chitinous exoskeleton. Within minutes, host and Sanagi symbiont are one. The host may be temporarily insane, however, as this experience inflicts enormous pain and a temporary 6D6 Sanity point loss from neural overload. When a host loses his or her rational mind, the rudimentary instinctual and reactive one of the symbiont takes over the body—its only goal is self-preservation and it has full command of all its weapons. After 2D12 hours and in a safe haven, the symbiont goes dormant and retracts its outer shell through two apertures on the shoulder blades, returning control to the host with a form that appears to be the original human one.

SANAGI BIO-MORPH ARMOR, Combined Symbiont and Host

Statistic modifiers to humanoid host: +20 to STR, +9 to SIZ, +9 to DEX, fixed CON 20, –40 SAN, +20 to HP.

Sanagi Tendrils: The purple tendrils of the pod-stage of the symbiont become an integral part of the host after symbiosis. When Rei transforms into Hachi-rei, the tendrils painfully burst through the skin, originating from the shoulder blade apertures and rapidly covering her entire body. Thickening, the tendrils harden into purplish bio-armor that is only humanoid in basic form. Hachi-rei's armored exoskeletal shell is a bipedal humanoid shape with numerous bony plates to protect the major muscle groups and vital organs. The resemblance is vaguely similar to a suit of futuristic body armor. The armor covering the head is complex and the helmet/mask configuration incorporates a breathing bio-filter to screen out toxins and enable underwater breathing, enhanced eye goggles that see into the infrared and ultra-violet spectrums, 360-degree mini sense organs that replace the ears, and a metallic nexus cluster centered on the forehead All serve to give her a distinctly alien look.

The Control Nexus: The control nexus is composed of an unidentifiable bio-metallic alloy. The control nexus located at the waist is not worn—it is a permanent new appendage of the altered host. It acts as the sense organ and energy orifice for the Sanagi symbiont. In human form, the control nexus is submerged beneath the skin but is detectable as a six-inch hemispheric lump under the epidermis. It is about the size of a softball.

Catastrophic Damage to the Control Nexus: To damage the control nexus takes 20 or more hit points. Once the damage is done, the symbiont consumes the host in a matter of seconds, horribly draining all fluids and lifeforce, and imploding into the nexus on the waist. Witnesses lose 1/1D10 Sanity points.

To rip the control nexus undamaged from the bio-morph requires 20 points of damage to be done, as well as STR 18 or more. The host is consumed as above but the nexus's spaghetti-like neural tendrils will attempt to re-grow a new host in 1D10 days. The host remembers everything up to the point of death, and suffers nightmares from subconscious memories of dying.

The Forehead Nexus Cluster: Located in the middle of the forehead, the forehead nexus cluster acts as a sense organ and energy orifice for the Sanagi symbiont, but to a much lesser degree than the waist mounted control nexus. The size of a dime, the nexus cluster can unleash a bio-laser on attackers. Damage to this cluster is repaired the next time the symbiont bio-morphs. In human form, the nexus cluster is undetectable.

Shoulder Apertures: Two small lumps on each shoulder blade about the size and color of silver dollars, the shoulder apertures (SAs) are the only part of the symbiont visible while in dormancy in a human host. (The SAs are the sphincters/apertures from which the outer tendrils burst forth to cover the host in bio-armor. This takes one round.) The SAs also act as sense organs so the symbiont can detect threats beyond the normal 180 degrees of human vision.

(The combination of the control nexus, forehead nexus cluster and shoulder apertures enable the symbiont to sense changes in air pressure, temperature, particle density and photon intensity with a high degree of finesse.)

Shoulder Tendrils: Four hooked tendrils extend from each shoulder. When the bio-morph is climbing, the eight tendrils reach out, wrapping around projections and hooking into recesses, adding +5 percentiles each to the host's Climb skill for a total of +40 percentiles. They can also be used as hooked bullwhips. In combat, the base tendril attack skill percentiles are evenly divided among the tendrils used in a given combat round. Thus, Hachi-Rei can attack with one tendril at 40 percentiles, two at 20 percentiles each, three at 13 percentiles each, etc. Once a tendril successfully grapples a target, the bio-morph does not need to allocate attack percentiles to that tendril until it releases and makes another attack. Each tendril has 4 hit points, STR 4, and no armor. When multiple tendrils grapple a single target, their STR ratings are added together; thus, five tendrils grappling the same target have a total STR of 5 x4=20. A severed tendril grows back in 24 hours. Each tendril has a range of 5 feet, but the range may be extended by 5 feet for each tendril on the same shoulder that is retracted (thus giving a single tendril a maximum range of 20 feet) The tendrils do not require a CON roll or any metabolic units to use (see "Weaknesses," below).

Weaknesses: Severe damage to the armor translates into pain for the host. Of course, a key weakness is the danger of a damaged control nexus. While a bio-mechanical creature, Hachi-Rei's power is not inexhaustible. She is an entity enhanced by alien technology. Another weakness is the limitations of the endurance of the original human organism—metabolism is heightened but fatigue still sets in. Fatigue is a reflection of Hachi-Rei's metabolism being burned to power the armor.

The keeper can choose one of the methods below to govern bio-morph energy consumption or choose another they feel works best for them.

- After the use of several energy weapons in a scene, the keeper should roll 20 (Hachi-Rei's CON) or less on percentile dice for each additional use of a special ability. Failure indicates fatigue has set in and the power, such as bio-laser, is unusable. Generous keepers might choose to also inflict damage penalties to such a roll.
- Hachi-Rei's CON of 4 can be considered her base energy level: 80 points of bio-chemical energy. When she uses her weapons, it drains this hyper metabolized chemical energy. If Hachi-Rei expends too much energy, it becomes impossible to use an ability with a high cost. A quick rule of thumb is to use the maximum possible damage for a bio-morph weapon and subtract that from the energy base of 80. For example: The kinetic cannon could cost 24 metabolic/bio-chemical units. If Hachi-Rei's bio-chemical reserves are exhausted, she spends energy by deducting metabolic energy units from her hit points. Activating the ultra-sonic spurs costs 12 units per spur for the scene.

SANAGI AUGMENTATION

Bio-Regeneration: 1 HP per minute.

Bio-Armor: 15 HP; +20 to host's HP

Enhanced Hand-to-Hand Combat: +20 STR, CON=20, +9 DEX, +9 SIZ.

Ultra-Sonic Spurs: Extend from each forearm, damage 2D6 per strike, 2 attacks per round.

Bio-Laser: Forehead nexus cluster, damage 1D6, 1 attack every 5 rounds

Kinetic Cannon: Main control nexus on waist, a glowing 6" ball of psycho-kinetic force forms and surges forth; 4D6 damage. 1 attack per 10 rounds.

ASAHARA SHINYAMA AND DOCTOR DAISUKE YAMAGUCHI

Shoulder Tendrils: Eight total, four per shoulder: +5 percentiles to Climb per tendril, damage 1D4 each, STR 4 and 4 HP each, no armor.

秘密結社と熱狂者

Secret Societies and Cultists

Buddha's Tears

Asahara Shinyama

Something about the way the man moved unsettled me. He was clinically blind, his sockets only housing dead white orbs, but he maneuvered so easily about the stateroom! And despite his obvious invalid state, he commanded awe and even outright fear from his underlings. Wearing the loose white robes of a Buddhist priest and a knotted and scraggly beard, he cast an unlikely image as the charismatic leader of a world-wide cult. Something at the edge of my waking mind was telling me that the man I was seeing was not quite right. A part of me was finding it hard not to believe in the truth of the rumor—that he had made a dark pact with fiends from the eight hells.

From out of relative obscurity, Asahara arose in the 1940s to take the reins of a failing family religious business. Surrounding himself with business associates and local authorities who are also devoted followers, Asahara has run Buddha's Tears with relatively little interference. Among his flock, he is called the "Pure-Blooded Master," *Jyun-Ketsu-Sama*. Reportedly he is the physical incarnation of the Bodhisattva Kuri-tabbha, an obscure enlightened being referred to only in passages from the *Kinki Kyōten*. Witnesses have claimed to see their master exhibit various types of ESP powers such as levitation, telekinesis, pyrokinesis, and other rarer abilities. A recluse, he is usually surrounded by his inner circle, the Forbidden Brotherhood (derived from the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus). Very little is known about his personal life except that his blindness since birth seems not to hinder him in the least.

ASAHARA SHINYAMA, Age 75, Charismatic Cult Leader of Buddha's Tears

STR 08	CON 10	SIZ 10	INT 18	POW 23
DEX 10	APP 07	EDU 22	SAN 0	HP 10

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Katana Swordcane 35%, damage 1D10.

Spells: Alter Weather, Bind Kitsune (Bind Loup-Garou), Cloud Memory, Command Ghost, Contact Kappa, Contact Kitsune, Contact the Dark Lord Aku-Shin Kage, Contact Emerald Lama, Dominate, Deflect Harm, Enchant Cane, Summon Oni, Thunder of Susano-Wo (Create Fetch Stick).

Skills: Astronomy 35%, Bargain 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 33%, Credit Rating 80%, Cultural Etiquette 53%, Fast Talk 80%, Hide 20%, History 35%, Lore (Buddhism) 78%, Martial Arts (Kendo) 35%, Meditation 55%, Navigate 65%, Own Language 92%, Occult 60%, Organize Cult 75%, Persuade 88%, Psychology 45%, Sneak 20%.

Dr. Yamaguchi

For many years this biochemist has faithfully followed Asahara, the cult leader of Buddha's Tears. More than just an administrator, the good doctor is also one of Asahara's closest confidantes. This is partly for pragmatic reasons, since Doctor Yamaguchi is the cult's most skilled chemist and is also director of the cult's scientific division. Through a planned apocalypse of nerve and biotoxin agents to which cult members are immune, the two conspirators plot to usher in a new Golden Age. While Dr. Yamaguchi is quite mad, he knows little if anything about his leader's supernatural dabbling with the Mythos. Dr. Yamaguchi toils on in his lab in the second sub-level of the Kyoto cult headquarters, creating lethal concoctions.

He often wears the same stained white lab coat and gray slacks.

DR. DAISUKE YAMAGUCHI, Age 48, Buddha's Eye, Director of Bio-Chem Division

STR 11	CON 12	SIZ 09	INT 17	POW 14
DEX 14	APP 08	EDU 22	SAN 25	HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: Hypodermic Syringe 70%, damage special. Use only impale result: the syringe contains highly virulent bio-toxins and mutagenics of POT 20 poison. The keeper should be creative with a successful attack's effects.

Skills: Administration 56%, Biology 80%, Chemistry 80%, Library Use 65%, Medicine 75%, Occult 10%, Persuade 38%, Parasitology 65%, Pharmacology 55%, Virology 65%.

THE OYABUN AND HASAMI

Dragon Lords

Hasami, "The Cutter"

In most respects, this young street tough is your average Yakuza enforcer. He bears the nickname Hasami, "The Cutter," for the brutal way he enforces his Oyabun's will. Hasami doesn't know his true name, as he was an orphan, living on the streets his entire life. The only person in his life who has been like family is the boss known only as the Oyabun. Though cold in his demeanor to Hasami, it is the only affection he has ever known and he is fiercely loyal to the Oyabun.

What makes this young man special is that his blood carries the pure lineage of the ancient Muvian sorcerer-kings, perhaps uniquely among those living in today's Japan.

HASAMI (THE CUTTER), Age 24, Dragon Lord Serpent, Kobun to the Oyabun

STR 16	CON 17	SIZ 12	INT 11	POW 10
DEX 15	APP 11	EDU 10	SAN 65	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Katana 75%, 1D10+1D4
Glock 17 9mm Auto 55%, 1D10

Armor: 2-point leather jacket.

Skills: Bargain 70%, Bushidō 18%, Climb 45%, Conceal 75%, Credit Rating 62%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 68%, Hide 50%, Jump 35%, Listen 50%, Martial Arts (Iai-do) 75%, Persuade 80%, Psychology 45%, Sneak 80%, Urban Navigation 35%, Zoku (Yakuza) 35%.

Akira Mori, aka The Oyabun

Known only as the Oyabun, "the Boss," this mysterious man withdrew from the daily business of running the Yakuza to follow his more secretive pursuits as one of the elders of the Dragon Lords. In addition to managing Yakuza holdings, he also maintains a controlling interest in Yotsubishi Heavy Industries guised as its cloistered 86-year-old president. By extension he also controls Project Yūrei.

The Oyabun is rather fat for a Japanese man and prefers Japanese clothes to Western. He often wears only a summer kimono and wooden geta (sandals) on his feet. He is totally bald. Dragon-motif *tattoos cover every inch* of his skin.

He is quite old. He may have somehow managed to extend his natural age. He may be several hundred years old. Many of his days are spent studying clan Mythos tomes or considering administration problems concerning the rackets within his charge.

Much about this figure bothers fellow Dragon Lord members, but fear of the Oyabun keeps them in line. He is far too powerful to openly challenge. A recluse, this Dragon Lord now may be more serpent than human. Some of his closest advisors believe that one of the serpent people has already replaced his soul. Wilder speculation by suspicious minds suggests that he may have never been human but is in fact the Aku-Shin Kage in human guise.

The Oyabun commands a foot soldier named Hasami within the Dragon Lord ranks.

A secret few know that the president of Yotsubishi Heavy Industries is actually the Oyabun, who conducts company meetings by tele-conferences and remains in the shadows, rarely interceding in daily affairs. He maintains a watchful eye on both Project Yūrei and Psi-Mech Division, removing useful information when it furthers his own goals. Those who suspect this connection and investigate often disappear.

The Oyabun is currently manipulating the Third Eye Agency to draw out threats to his plans and to force the hands of other Mythos organizations. Although he wants to bring about the Age of Mappo, he realizes that he must wait "for the stars to be right." All things must be in their proper alignment, and certain events must come to pass to trigger the great cataclysm. In short, the Oyabun needs pawns like the Third Eye investigators to set things in motion.

THE OYABUN, Age 124(?), Dragon Lord Elder/ AKIRA MORI, President of Yotsubishi Heavy Industries

STR 11	CON 13	SIZ 13	INT 14	POW 18
DEX 13	APP 12	EDU 14	SAN 0	HP 13

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Katana 84%, damage 1D10
9mm Automatic 40%, damage 1D10

Armor: 5-point light kevlar vest.

Spells: Contact Tatsu, Hands of Colubra, Summon/Bind Child of Yig.

Skills: Accounting 45%, Bargain 80%, Bushidô 78%, Conceal 55%, Credit Rating 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 18%, Fast Talk 78%, Hide 20%, Law 55%, Martial Arts (Sumô) 55%, Lore (Shinto) 43%, Occult 20%, O-Keiko (Tea Ceremony) 45%, Persuade 88%, Psychology 65%, Sneak 80%, Zoku (Yakuza) 75%.

指導者と管理者

Leaders and Administrators

Hideki Ito

Commissioner Ito has always been a solid officer, but that's not what put him at the top of the ranks. It has always been a matter of being in the right place at the right time for Officer Ito, who has always shown dedication and loyalty, and put the NPF's goals before his personal needs. These days, he is much more a political figure than a police officer. After all, he has to contend with demands by politicians of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the pressure of business cartels like Yotsubishi, Nirio, and Sansui, and keep the imperial palace happy. Of late, Commissioner Ito has had to contend with the worrisome cult Bukkyô no Namida (Buddha's Tears) and the recent anthrax attempt in Shinjuku Station. He also has a nagging feeling that something big is on the horizon.

HIDEKI ITO, Age 54, Commissioner, National Police Agency, Autonomous Tokyo NPF District

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 13	INT 15	POW 13
DEX 10	APP 11	EDU 17	SAN 70	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: 9mm Revolver 55%, damage 1D10
Telescopic Baton 65%, damage 1D4+1D4 or stun

Armor: 8-point police issue Kevlar ballistic vest.

Skills: Bushidô 65%, Drive Patrol Car 45%, Credit Rating 45%, English 30%, Fast Talk 65%, Handgun 55%, Law 55%, Martial Arts (Kendô) 70%, Persuade 15%, Psychology 75%, Spot Hidden 50%, Urban Navigation 45%.

Equipment: 2-way walkie-talkie (9 mile range), 12 spare bullets, police ID badge, handcuffs, halogen flashlight, police commissioner's vehicle (Infinity 135 with bulletproof glass and steel reinforced panels), access to police database, handbook of ordinances and regulations and navy blue uniform.

Ichiro Tanaka, aka Ken Tanaka

The past six months have been rather hectic for Director Tanaka. He had to take the reins of power after the mysterious death of the former director, and the chairman of Yotsubishi has remained in the shadows as usual. First, there was the *Project Yûrei White Paper*, which was his own initiative and highly resisted throughout the agency for reasons ranging from questioning the ability of a DVD medium to contain Mythos magic . . . to the threat of mass distribution *because* of the medium. Next, there is the continuing dilemma with the Psi-Mech division, which is compromised, out of control, and beyond Tanaka's ability to shut down. These are just internal problems. There are also the threats of the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus, Budalha's Tears, the Dragon Lords, and the Black Monk! To further complicate matters, the chairman has ordered Tanaka to assist an obscure group of loose-cannon investigators—the Third Eye Agency—under the alias of "Ken Tanaka." But Prof. Mari Makoto's ecto-plasmic distillation process does hold promise for renewable energy, if only the old codgers on the board would approve it. And then there is the fuming request for new equipment to the mother company of Yotsubishi. Yes, the kacho of Project Yûrei is going to be quite busy.

DIRECTOR ICHIRO TANAKA ("KEN TANAKA"), Age 43, Acting Section Head, Project Yûrei

STR 09	CON 11	SIZ 12	INT 17	POW 16
DEX 09	APP 12	EDU 20	SAN 50	HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 45%, damage 1D3
Taser 35%, damage stun

Armor: none.

Skills: Business 40%, Computer Use 65%, Corporate Culture 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Credit Rating 80%, Cultural Etiquette 55%, English 58%, Library Use 55%, Lore (Buddhist) 35%, Meditation 35%, Occult 35%, Parapsychology 85%, Persuade 65%, Psychology 65%.

Naoki Satô

Mr. Satô became vice-president of Tokyo University the traditional way: As a facilitator, he is skilled in maintaining group harmony and keeping egos smoothed. Like any good chairman, he rarely makes decisions or takes risks, and despite the departments he is in charge of, he does not know any of the subjects in great depth. The pressure Mari Makoto is putting on him for funding in Parapsychology is troublesome, especially with the conflict of interest with investors at Yotsubishi. Another problem is incorrigible American researcher Sharpley and his collaboration with resident expert in archeology, Jiro Hasefumi—despite the chairman's best efforts to respect Prof. Hiro Fuji, who has gone through proper channels. The break-ins in recent months have also been worrisome. Despite these problems, Satô still finds time to play eighteen holes of golf every Sunday with Yotsubishi and Nirio execs. He and his wife are also planning a trip to Okinawa during the Golden Week holiday.

NAOKI SATÔ, Age 62, Chair for the Departments of Archeology, Parapsychology, and Cryptozoology

STR 08	CON 10	SIZ 11	INT 13	POW 12
DEX 11	APP 14	EDU 16	SAN 78	HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 45%, damage 1D3
Golf Club 35%, damage 1D4

Armor: none.

Skills: Academic Lore 55%, Bargain 40%, Corporate Culture 45%, Credit Rating 80%, Cultural Etiquette 80%, Drive (Golf Cart) 45%, Fast Talk 75%, Golf 55%, Library Use 35%, Occult 25%, Persuade 75%.

Eishi Honda, Colonel

SDF officer E. Honda has only worked in this position for the last year. A desk job, it is more or less a demotion. Formerly an SDF helicopter pilot on patrol, Honda received a distress call from a nearby US stealth fighter which had crashed after colliding with a "monster." The downed aircraft quickly sank. Honda rescued the pilot before being given permission by SDF Command. Honda was given a Medal of Honor by the US, and demoted by the SDF for disobeying orders. The upshot of this is that a highly capable SDF junior officer is accessible to the public (and investigators) while in a useless position. The collision and subsequent coverup by the US and SDF has sparked his interest. This is compounded by the fact that the formerly mythical Gazira recently came ashore at Fukuoka and razed a small coastal town. The government issued press statements

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: EISHI HONDA, TATSURO KIHARA, HIDEKI ITO, NAOKI SATŌ, HIDE TOMITA, ICHIRO TANAKA

that a severe earthquake and tidal wave wrecked the town and bribed the residents into silence. Honda is outraged but impotent. He has vowed to get to the bottom of the secrecy. The truth is out there.

COL. EISHI HONDA, Age 37, Self Defense Forces Officer, Public Relations

STR 16	CON 17	SIZ 15	INT 14	POW 14
DEX 15	APP 12	EDU 16	SAN 80	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapon: M64 assault rifle 55%, damage 2D6+3

Armor: camo Kevlar helmet (5 HP to head), camo high impact body armor (12 HP to torso).

Skills: Bushidô 65%, English 75%, First Aid 15%, Listen 35%, Martial Arts (Jujitsu) 50%, Occult 15%, Rifle 40%, Sneak 45%, Computer Use 35%, Pilot (Helicopter) 75%, Navigation 30%.

Equipment: camo web gear (canteen, GPS, medical field kit, rain gear, 3 rifle clips), night vision goggles, SDF ID, and camo olive green and beige fatigues.

Tatsuro Kihara

Since high school, Kihara knew the order of things, the way things should be in Japan—where foreigners should go, what should be done with all the corruption and softness in today's Japan. Kihara knew that his country was in crisis and that action was needed, the sort of action that Yukiyo Mishima took in the 1970s and, by Amaterasu, so would Kihara. So would Kihara—no mater what the price to his soul, he would save the Land of the Rising Sun from itself. Today Kihara's zeal is supported by over two dozen followers who blanket the streets of Tokyo in loudspeaker trucks extolling slogans from the last great era of Japan, the empire of the 1940s. Backed by Kazuya and the Oyabun's gangs, he will return Japan to its former glories.

Incidentally, Tatsuro is the son of Shinjuku Ward's chief police inspector, Keiji Kihara. A family embarrassment, Tatsuro is a marginal police informant (he respects his father's profession) but this will not get investigators very far.

TATSURO KIHARA, Age 32, Leader of Political Extremist Group

STR 13	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 12	POW 12
DEX 12	APP 15	EDU 13	SAN 40	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: .22 Bolt-Action Rifle* 55%, damage 1D6+2
Wakizashi 85%, damage 1D8+1D4
Tanto 65%, damage 1D6+1D4
Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D4+1D4
**The rifle has a homemade silencer (a successful Listen roll is required to hear it firing).*

Armor: 4-point leather jacket w/metal plates.

Skills: Budhidô 35%, Cultural Etiquette 10%, Drive Automobile 34%, Fast Talk 58%, Hide 50%, Jingoism 55%, Martial Arts (Iaido) 46%, Patriotism 65%, Persuade 35%, Poor Hygiene 35%, Psychology 35%, Sneak 45%, Zoku (Yakuza) 85%.

Hide Tomita

Doctor Tomita has never found it easy doing the thankless job of helping the mentally ill in Tokyo; there are so many patients. In a culture that doesn't like to talk about illness, that equates sickness with spiritual impurity, what can he expect but pained grimaces and nervous fidgeting by the sane citizens? That's why Doctor Tomita regards the institute as his child, for it was his sacrifices 25 years ago that started this organization, rather than following the easy path of a lucrative psychology practice. Today, the institute offers the best mental health care in Japan. Support in the community has been slight, so the 1,000,000 yen grant by Yotsubishi was a great aid in the completion of the institute's new wing. The money also helped fund a new area of research into holistic healing using the ancient Asian practices of acupuncture, herbs, and meditation for non-psychotic patients. The results have been promising, at times rivaling accepted Western medications. Yes, the future is bright as more patients than ever before come through the institute's secure gates.

DR. HIDE TOMITA, Age 86, Director, Tokyo Institute of Wellness

STR 12	CON 11	SIZ 13	INT 17	POW 15
DEX 14	APP 14	EDU 19	SAN 70	HP 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Hypodermic w/sedatives 65%, damage nil.
Strait Jacket 45%, constrain and bind to STR 32 (requires two consecutive successful rolls).

Skills: Acupuncture 36%, Corporate Culture 20%, Credit Rating 45%, Cultural Etiquette 15%, Persuade 78%, Bargain 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 02%, Credit Rating 70%, First Aid 85%, Listen 55%, Herbalism 25%, Hypnosis 45%, Medicine 65%, Meditation 35%, Psychiatry 85%, Psychotherapy 80%, Pleasantness 55%.

浪人

Independents' Gallery

Aiko, Demon Hunter

Long black hair in pigtails and body trained to the height of perfection, Aiko has spent most of her life in training, for she was born into her calling. She is only one demon hunter in a long unbroken chain of hunters back to the time of Empress Himiko. Charged by the empress with the sacred duty of guardian, a demon hunter protects the unwitting people from the truth and in the process helps them maintain the safe illusory cocoon of normalcy. Almost all hunters stem from one of a handful of family lines. Aiko belongs to one of the most pre-eminent. Her ancient ancestor Haryuji was entrusted with the enchanted tachi blade, *Jishin*, to battle the forces of spiritual corruption.

Even today, hunters travel in elder/trainee pairs and compare notes at the annual remembrance at Ise Shrine for fallen hunters. Aiko, training under her father until he was killed last year by Oni Lord Daraku, continues alone with only the aid of her grandmother who was once a hunter herself. Aiko is young and still has much to learn, but with the aid of grandmother and the enchanted heirloom, Jishin, she will one day confront her father's killer and banish him forever from the Realm of Earth back to the flaming pits of Jigoku.

In the meantime, Aiko has another kind of hell to contend with: high school exams. Between donning her sailor suit for school and her battle gear for hunting, she has little time for contemplation or boys.

Incidentally, Aiko is a left handed swordswoman, which is a rarity as all martial arts training is for right handedness.

DEMON HUNTER AIKO

DEMON HUNTER AIKO, Age 17, Hereditary Yôkai & Obake Exorcist, Exterminator

STR 16	CON 17	SIZ 12	INT 16	POW 19
DEX 17	APP 17	EDU 11	SAN 80	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Jishin, Enchanted Tachi 55%, damage 1D12+1D4.
Bead Necklace 35%, damage trip/ensnare
Naginata 65%, damage 1D8+1D4
Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3+1D4

Armor: 7-point O-yoroi breastplate (lightweight red enameled plate armor).

Skills: Climb 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 05%, Hide 45%, Jump 55%, Library Use 25%, Occult 45%, Religion (Buddhism) 35%, Sneak 40%, Martial Arts (Ninjutsu & Naginata) 65%, Spot Hidden 55%, Track 40%, Urban Navigation 35%, Zoku (High School) 65%.

Jishin: Under special circumstances, such as when the wielder is in such danger that certain death is the only possible outcome, she can chant a prayer to the original ancestor spirit of the family line, Haryuji Ujigami. If the clan's patron hears the call (keeper's discretion), and the threat is from an oni, yôkai, or extraterrestrial entity, then the enchanted blade is able to simulate the following spells for a lineal descendant of Haryuji: Amaterasu's Gaze, Bestow Karma, Deflect Harm, Elder Sign (engraved on blade), Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Thunder of Susano-Wo (blade functions as a Ferch Stick), and Sutra of Exorcism.

Equipment: used utility bicycle (mamachari), PHS cell phone (keitai), school regulation backpack, pencil case, textbooks, print club book, baggy socks, and two girls' school uniforms, one summer and one winter.

Daraku, Oni Lord

While able to cloak himself in illusion for considerable periods, the Oni Lord Daraku, one of the most powerful of the oni race, prefers to reside in an abandoned and desolate monastery high on Mount Ishizuchi on the island of Shikoku in western Japan. Why this oni lord chooses to remain on Earth rather than the relative safety of Jigoku or Yomi or even the Dreamlands oni citadel is unknown. It may have something to do with another equally enigmatic being, the Black Monk. It may also be that Daraku can taste the end times and eagerly hopes to be the first to witness the awakening of the Great Dragon Ryûjin high in his mountain abode.

Among his many deeds, Daraku is the very same oni summoned by the monk Joken. Joken went on to craft *The Scrolls of the Hells, Jigoku Zoshi*, based upon Daraku's excruciating detail of the Underworld. It is also possible that with the death of Joken, Daraku is now trapped in the Realm of Humans.

When Daraku chooses to disguise himself and walk among humans, he humorously takes the form of a traveling yamabushi priest, an exorcist. The flaw of any illusion by Daraku is that he casts his true shadow, that of a forty-foot-tall horned fiend, and so is careful to keep this imperfection well concealed.

Daraku has taken up a new hobby. He has noticed the bumbling prodding of the organizations Project Yûrei and the Third Eye Agency into Mythos affairs in Japan and has decided to play a bit of a game with them. He has also taken to toying with the pathetic group Buddha's Tears by revealing his true form to them. Since then, the cult's leader has agreed to do the bidding of the great oni lord.

Recently, Daraku killed a meddlesome demon hunter. Those misguided family lines supposedly died out centuries ago. Now the hunter's petulant child is taking up the crusade against him. Poor fool.

ONI LORD DARAKU, His Lordship of Corruption, Agent of Destruction, Servant of Emma-O, Co-creator of *Jigoku Zoshi*, and Advisor to the Dugpa

STR 32	CON 22	SIZ 38	INT 16	POW 18
DEX 14	HP 30			

Damage Bonus: +3D6.

Weapons: Tetsu-Bo (8' iron club) 45%, damage 1D10+3D6
Bite 20%, damage 1D6
Stomp 35%, damage 1D6+3D6

Armor: 3-point thick, bony hide.

Spells: Army of Hell*, Chasm to Hell*, Cleanse Ignorance (Curse of Darkness), Contact Deity/Aku-Shin Kage*, Create Hungry Ghost*, Create Yôkai*, Hellgate*, Summon/Bind Oni*, Escape the Grasp of Emma (Create Self Ward).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity Points to see Daraku's true form.

ONI LORD DARAKU

Kage-Hoshi Bozu, The Black Monk

Dressed in the burned and blackened robes of a Buddhist monk, this strange man usually appears to tempt investigators with viral clues to ease or speed their research. Instead, he usually succeeds in driving the receivers insane or off the trail they seek. The Black Monk is a tall man with a gaunt face who appears to be in his late forties. His skin, including that shiny shaved scalp that marks him as a monk, are deeply tanned a burgundy hue from long periods walking outdoors. At first glance, that he may be Japanese is hard to determine, but his features are clearly Asian.

Many tales surround the origins of this enigmatic figure. By his manner it is believed that the man known only as the Black Monk was once a Buddhist priest. His true age is unknown but it is said that he is in actuality a Dark Taoist Alchemist who achieved immortality by becoming the servant of the Emerald Lama. Other tales place the Black Monk as the author of the autobiographical text, the *Makafushigi Michi (The Mysterious Path)*, a tome which suggests he is half-oni in nature.

THE BLACK MONK

An avatar of Hastur, the Emerald Lama, holds the Black Monk as a favored servant, so much so that the Black Monk may be a Fosterling of a Great Old One, perhaps by Hastur himself. No reports discuss what the Black Monk's body appears like under his voluminous robes, so this is indeed possible. The Black Monk represents the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus in Japan. The Wandering Path mentions numerous meetings between the Black Monk and the Green Caps in medieval Japan.

Perhaps he is some of these things, maybe he is all of them; the choice is up to the keeper. Whatever the case, this being's connections within occult circles in Japan are myriad and intertwined.

KAGE-HOSHI BOZU, The Black Monk, Age 468, Tainted Taoist Immortal, Servant of the Emerald Lama

STR 20	CON 22	SIZ 17	INT 19	POW 28
DEX 12	APP 07	EDU 15	SAN 0	HP 20

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: none.

Armor: none, but the Black Monk has the ability to recover from mortal wounds on up to 70% of his body (i.e., 14 hit points), recovering all damage in 1D10 rounds.

Skills: Bargain 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 67%, Fast Talk 80%, Hide 90%, Martial Arts (Aikidô) 90%, Meditation 94%, History 75%, Navigate 95%, Occult 91%, Own Language 92%, Persuade 96%, Psychology 45%, Sneak 70%, Spot Hidden 75%, Track 60%.

Spells: Army of Hell*, Chasm to Hell*, Cleanse Ignorance (Curse of Darkness), Contact Deity/Nyarlathotep, Call/Dismiss Aku-Shin Kage*, Contact Deity/Emerald Lama*, Create Hungry Ghost*, Create Yôkai*, Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Hellgate*, Scry The Cold Hells/Hot Hells*, Summon/Bind Hungry Ghost*, Summon/Bind Oni*, Summon/Bind Yôkai*, Thunder of Susano-Wo (Create Fetch Stick), Escape the Grasp of Emma (Create Self Ward), Wisdom of Emperors (Chant of Thoth).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Kazuya

Appearing to be a common street thug, this being is actually a local patron kami of the Yakuza, the Japanese Mafia. A vain creature, Kazuya spends a lot of his personal energy to stay physically manifest, so it is natural that many people take him as a living flesh-and-blood human. The kami can remain material for an hour at a time before he needs to rest and recharge.

KAZUYA

Though he does not remember it, Kazuya was once a living person. In the 1950s he was a street lieutenant of a local gumi in Shita-Matchi, the seedy side of Tokyo. He fell into a dispute with a Yakuza boss who was a secret member of the Dragon Lords. Trouble to the plans of the Dragon Lords cult, but a valuable Yakuza soldier, he was killed and turned into an ancestor spirit by that secretive group. (As indicated in "Light and Shadow," page 163, Kazuya mistakenly thinks he is a kami from the 1500s.)

As with most kami created in such a manner, he only has the most rudimentary remembrances of his past life, but his human appearance and personality shine through clearly, and may spur the occasional mob boss to wonder who this being is who seems so familiar. While a loyal servant to the Dragon Lords, his interests lie with the Yakuza as a whole and so he follows the letter of commands given to him by his masters but not necessarily their intent—more of his human personality showing through.

Typically Kazuya appears as he did in life but is of modernized appearance. Wearing a black oiled duster, his hair is dyed blond and is shoulder-length, favoring the long front bangs that many Asian gangs now grow. In his ear is a diamond earring and on his tanned face is an impish grin capped by gold teeth. His fingers sport many expensive jeweled rings.

KAZUYA, Apparent Age mid-20s, True Age Unknown, Kami, Local Guardian of Yakuza

STR *	CON *	SIZ 14	INT 16	POW 35
DEX *	APP 14	HP*		

**Kazuya can physically manifest at a cost of 1 magic point per point of STR, CON, or DEX. This physical manifestation lasts one hour.*

Attacks: On his bare flesh are numerous tattoos, which he can make come alive when he chooses. For this, he spends the listed magic points and the image crawls from his body to form a shadow version as deadly as the real thing. Shadow animals are solid but can be damaged

by daylight (1D10 hit points) and bright artificial lights (spotlights do 1D4 hit points).

When the job is done, the shadow animal returns to his skin, becoming a tattoo again. If a shadow animal is defeated or banished, Kazuya loses its magic points, but the shadow animal returns after the magic points regenerate.

Animal Weapons: Bite 45%, damage 1D6
Claw 30%, damage 1D8+db*
**The snake cannot make claw attacks.*

SAMPLE TATTOOS**

Dragon:	STR 25	CON 16	SIZ 25	DEX 08
	Move 04	HP 21	DB +2D6	MP 13
Tiger:	STR 22	CON 10	SIZ 16	DEX 19
	Move 10	HP 13	DB +1D6	MP 08
Snake:	STR 20	CON 13	SIZ 17	DEX 15
	Move 06	HP 15	DB +1D6	MP 09
Mantis:	STR 10	CON 03	SIZ 02	DEX 15
	Move 12	HP 03	DB –1D6	MP 01

***Total shadow-animal magic points can never be more than Kazuya's current magic points.*

Skills: Bargain 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 33%, Fast Talk 80%, Hide 50%, Own Language 92%, Occult 90%, Persuade 85%, Psychology 65%, Sneak 60%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see Kazuya's true state.

Pimiko, Empress

Short in stature, this five-foot-tall bronze-skinned beauty is the ruler of the Yamato Plainsmen, but her most distinguishing features are her gold eyes, which twinkle with wisdom and intelligence. Her thick ebony hair trails down her slight frame to her hips and she often wears the ceremonial white dress, red sash, bronze mirror, and magatama necklace of her station as high shamaness of the Shinto religion.

The empress is more than a namesake of the historical figure from the Kofun Period in Japan's history; they are both the same person. Upon her death in the living world around the third century C.E., Empress Pimiko, then a powerful sorceress, was able to shift her essence into the Dreamlands. There she recreated her earthly domain, calling it the Yamato Plain. There the empress continues her devout worship and communication with the many kami of the Japanese pantheon. Highly reclusive, the empress only permits audiences with females; males are forbidden to set eyes upon her without her permission.

Her secret is that she is half kami in nature and it is only the sacrifice of magic points in offerings to her as a living deity that allows her to maintain her youth. If she does not receive at least ten magic points or 1 POW each month, she begins to age rapidly. Most of the time she remains in seclusion and communicates only with her inner court of all-female servants. In times of desperation, through a secret ceremony, she can drain POW from males, but must then slay such men. To fail to do that would violate her vow of chastity.

It is written in the *Kingdom of Wa* that one day the empress will return to the waking world to reclaim her rightful domain from the interloping male emperors. Just how she plans to fulfill this prophecy is unknown.

***Note:** the Japanese Dreamlands will be discussed in a future book.*

EMPRESS PIMIKO, Shamaness Matriarch of Yamato

STR 11	CON 12	SIZ 6	INT 19	POW 30
DEX 16	APP 17	EDU 19	HP 09	

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Ceremonial Tachi 80%, damage 1D12.

Skills: Bargain 30%, Channeling 94%, Cthulhu Mythos 57%, Dreaming 80%, Dream Lore 75%, Fast Talk 60%, Hide 90%, Imperial Bearing 75%, Listen 50%, Natural History 75%, Navigate 55%, Persuade 96%, Occult 99%, Ride Horse 68%, Sneak 70%, Track 99%.

Spells: Amaterasu's Gaze*, Bolonath's Furnace, Contact Deity/Greater Kami*, Contact Kitsune*, Contact Tatsu*, Create Ancestor Spirit*, Crystal World, Deflection, Dragon's Wrath*, Enchant Ink*, Eye of Inari (Blight/Bless Crop), Katarien's Heat Wave, Light of the Sun (Augur), Passing Unseen, Summon/Bind Lesser Kami*, Seraph's Glory, Susano-Wo's Wrath (Alter Weather—Call forth Typhoon).

*New spells in this book; see pages 136–143 for more information.

Locale: The Yamato Plain (The Land of Wa/Japanese Dreamlands).

Tamai-San, Detective

TAMAI-SAN

Tamai-San is a kindly old lady who is just a bit too nosy even for a Japanese spinster. Widowed, she seems to have plenty of time on her hands and friends in many places. She has the uncanny ability to get the dirt on just about anyone. Most people underestimate this innocuous old woman. With this sharp private eye, that becomes their fatal mistake.

In her late fifties, she is still quite spry for her age but her locks are almost completely gray. Her dress is usually conservative and humble, belying the wealth she has at her command. When walking long distances she favors a cane with a finely carved dragon's head in deeply varnished Japanese pine (with a concealed sword within).

Her husband was a wealthy archeologist who expressed interest in historical instances of the paranormal in seemingly mundane accounts such as the doings of Empress Pimiko. After thirty years in his shadow, Tamai-San had acquired a taste for his unusual passions and has kept his massive occult library. She has capitalized on her natural investigative powers and has gone into business for herself. She finds herself drawn to the more unusual cases. Many times she is totally unaware of the big picture but can effectively bluff her way far enough that people usually spill the their stories and link up the facts. So far, she has only skirted the fringes of the Mythos world but what she has seen deeply disturbs her. These visions of the abyss have taken away some of the visceral fun, the reason she first went into the PI business.

TAMAI-SAN, Age 58, Harmless Old Lady and PI

STR 09	CON 08	SIZ 08	INT 16	POW 14
DEX 07	APP 08	EDU 17	SAN 90	HP 08

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Sword cane 35%, damage 1D6
Umbrella 25%, damage 1D2.

Skills: Archaeology 45%, Bargain 30%, Computer Use 18%, Cthulhu Mythos 08%, Credit Rating 80%, Fast Talk 50%, Japanese 80%, Library Use 35%, Occult 40%, Organize Cult 75%, Persuade 48%, Psychology 45%, Track 20%.

Yonaguni Monuments

The characters in this section are listed for the benefit of keepers who desire to run an adventure based on the "Yonaguni Monuments" story at the beginning of the book (see pages 10–24 and 284–292 for more information).

Clark Sharpley

5'10". Dr. Sharpley arrived this summer at Tokyo University as a visiting scholar. Later, he met with Todai archeologist Jiro Hasafumi in Okinawa to investigate the underwater Yonaguni Monuments.

Officials at Stanford University do not have the details, but at some point Sharpley borrowed several ancient artifacts he had been researching for the last dozen or so years, and took them with him when he traveled to Japan. Missing are hammered copper sheaves of the seventh century work, the *Nihonjiki*, the mythic origins of Japan, held in the Stanford Rare Collection Archives. Parts of a fragmentary copy of the *R'Lyeh Text* in Chinese are believed gone as well. Also missing is a black jade egg-shaped stone similar in appearance to one of the Japanese Imperial Regalia, the Jewel. Confirmation that these items are in Sharpley's possession is impossible as Dr. Sharpley is currently in the care of the Tokyo Institute for Wellness and is unavailable for questioning. Sharpley is not blamed, however, as it is believed that during the Yonaguni Incident he was assaulted and robbed of his materials. Gathering more information on the events at the Yonaguni Monuments is difficult, as Prof. Hasafumi is listed as missing and his graduate assistant Emi Ochi also resides at the Institute for Wellness.

DR. CLARK H. SHARPLEY, Age 46, Department of Ancient Languages and Myths, Stanford University, Todai Visiting Scholar

STR 12	CON 15	SIZ 15	INT 18	POW 17
DEX 14	APP 13	EDU 20	SAN 45 (0 now)	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Standing 35%, Archaeology 60%, Bargain 30%, Clairvoyance* 34%, Credit Rating 45%, Computer Use 48%, Cthulhu Mythos 18%, English 99%, Fast Talk 50%, History (Japan) 65%, Library Use 55%, Literature (Asia) 45%, Lore (Japan) 35%, Mythos Language (Muvian Naacal) 18%, Occult 40%, Other Language (Kobû Japanese) 67%, Other Language (Latin) 60%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 55%, Other Language (Modern Japanese) 85%.

* *See "Optional Rules: Psychic Abilities" on page 199.*

Jiro Hasafumi

5'11". Professor Hasafumi is a rugged field archeologist infamous for radical theories on human history. Jiro's most welcoming feature is his warm open smile framed by a scraggly black beard. At almost six feet tall, his choice of attire is almost humorous: a pink t-shirt and frayed blue jeans. A red baseball cap with a Tokyo Giants logo, his favorite team, tops curly hair peppered with gray. Professor Hasafumi has managed limited grant funding for this pet project but not without personal hardship and great cost to both Dr. Clark Sharpley's and his professional reputations. Jiro has also put considerable personal resources into this forbidden archeology research. His team has a small but workable lab in a compound at a decommissioned US Naval base in Okinawa. For fieldwork, Hasafumi has leased an old fishing trawler and converted it for research work, equipping it with a small home-built submersible, seabed sonar, and deep-sea diving gear. Support staff consists of three dedicated grad students, but his personal funds are quickly dwindling. He has been forced to seek outside backers, ones who demand results. He is unaware the backers are in fact Yotsubishi Psi-Mech interests. The chance that Hasafumi will prove his radical theories on the true origins of humanity based on physical evidence from Antarctica and the Yonaguni Monuments seems increasingly slim, as he has not called in to his Todai office for some time now.

JIRO HASAFUMI, PH.D., Age 54, Todai Archeology Department

STR 13	CON 14	SIZ 16	INT 18	POW 17
DEX 12	APP 16	EDU 19	SAN 65	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Lore (Todai) 25%, Academic Standing 15%, Credit Rating 65%, Classical Chinese 60%, Computer Use 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Cultural Etiquette 15%, Fast Talk 50%, History (Japan) 65%, Library Use 55%, Occult 40%, Lore (Japan) 35%, Lore (Lost Civilizations) 85%, Mythos Language (Muvian Naacal) 18%, Other Language (English) 85%, Other Language (Kobû Japanese) 43%, SCUBA Operation 78%, Swim 45%, Underwater Archaeology 90%.

Hiro Fuji

5'4". Professor Hiro Fuji firmly believes that the so-called Yonaguni underwater ruins are nothing more than natural structures resulting from vulcanism. Perhaps not surprisingly, Fuji's field of expertise is geology. Short in stature, Fuji wears his neatly groomed hair meticulously combed back. He also wears glasses for near sightedness. He favors affordable but impeccable business suits. Fuji's posture is commanding and autocratic. Once a person sees beyond his initial politeness his demeanor can be irritating though he will back down if lacking "muscle" to carry out his orders. His views are very traditional and elitist; he scoffs, as most Japanese experts do, at the concept that Koreans and Japanese were at some point from the same racial stock; he also believes that incidents such as the Slaughter of Manchuria in WWII are Western media exaggerations. His team of fifteen researchers commands a state-of-the-art multi-million dollar university-chartered research vessel, the *Todai Maru*. They also lease the *Todai-Chan*, a robotic submersible from the Japan Marine Science and Technology Center (JAMSTEC). In addition, a complement of ten professional SCUBA divers and full grant funding from Todai all stand ready to aid Dr. Fuji in proving his theory that the underwater features at Yonaguni are only natural geological formations. Additional funding and the services of Serpent "advisors" have been provided by the Oyabun, who understands the actual significance of the ruins and desires to awaken its slumbering inhabitants, unknown to the skeptical Dr. Fuji. The Professor's base of operations for his research team is at generously donated facilities on the Ryukyu University campus in Naha, Okinawa.

HIRO FUJI, Ph.D., Age 61, Todai Archeology Department Head

STR 10	CON 11	SIZ 13	INT 16	POW 12
DEX 12	APP 12	EDU 18	SAN 40	HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Lore (Todai) 65%, Academic Standing 55%, Archaeology 70%, Bureaucratic Administration 45%, Credit Rating 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 4%, Cultural Etiquette 45%, History (Japan) 35%, Library Use 35%, Geology 93%, Lore (Japan) 30%, Other Language (English) 25%.

Emi Ochi

5'7". Emi Ochi is Dr. Hasafumi's assistant and the eldest graduate student in his research team. With only one semester before receiving a PhD., and highly rank conscious, she rigorously maintains the pecking order within the team and her status as second in command. Ochi will likely achieve great things in her professional career through her distant family ties to the imperial family. Acting as an interface for Dr. Hasafumi with his financial backers and equipment contractors, her diligence, shrewdness and practical sense have allowed Hasafumi's expedition to get as far it has. Favoring white lab coats, Emi wears her silky black hair shoulder length which in turn frames a delicately featured pale face. However, any softness in her features is often negated by an aura of severity and palatable malice to newcomers. An organizational genius, she constantly seems busy recording something either on clipboards or notebooks. Her demeanor towards those outside the small circle of Hasafumi's research staff is rigid and suspicious. Only those with ability to view into the astral or ethereal realms, such as priests or shamans, may see an astral serpent's 12' tall ethereal form superimposed over her body. The keeper may wish to keep this possession unknown to all but the most astute of investigators.

EMI OCHI (Possessed by Astral Serpent), Age 26, Senior Graduate Student, Todai Archeology Department

STR 9	CON 9	SIZ 14	INT 17	POW 16
DEX 15	APP 17	EDU 17	SAN 45	HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Lore (Todai) 25%, Academic Standing 45%, Archaeology 60%, Bureaucratic Administration 35%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 19%, Cultural Etiquette 25%, History (Mu) 18%, Library Use 45%, Lore (Japan) 30%, Mythos Language (Muvian Nascal) 45%, Other Language (English) 9%.

Kenji Ohasa

5'10". Kenji is in charge of all computer analysis, decryptum and sonar mapping for Dr. Hasafumi's expedition to Okinawa. He is also no slouch in robotics and waldo operation. An unrepentant computer geek who loves his customized Macintosh G5 towers, Kenji wears circular wire frame glasses, hair to his shoulders, knee length denim shorts, Air Jordans, and a t-shirt that says "Noodle Power!"

KENJI OHASA, Age 23, Graduate Student, Computer Science Department, University of Ryukyu, Naha

STR 10	CON 13	SIZ 15	INT 16	POW 13
DEX 13	APP 13	EDU 16	SAN 80	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Cartography 58%, Computer Use 95%, Cryptology (Computer Cracker) 28%, Electronics 78%, Internet Use 85%, Lore (Conspiracy Theories) 45%, Other Language (English) 45%, Radio Operator 45%, Sonar Use 65%, SCUBA Operation 18%, Swim 35%, Underwater Archaeology 20%.

Ishii Moritani

6'. A certified SCUBA instructor and avid deep sea diver, Moritani jumped at the chance to dive off the rumored underwater ruins near Yonaguni Island. Moritani is a pleasant and gregarious man whom people find instantly likeable. In Hasafumi's team, he is responsible for maintaining SCUBA gear and research equipment as well as consulting with Mr. Ohasa on underwater sonar mapping, local volcanology and meteorology. Often outdoors, a lightly tanned Moritani favors a crew cut, tank top t-shirts and cutoff jeans. He is quite lean and muscular, possibly from extensive dive experience.

ISHII MORITANI, Age 25, Graduate Student, Todai Oceanography Department

STR 15	CON 16	SIZ 16	INT 15	POW 15
DEX 14	APP 14	EDU 15	SAN 87	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Standing 8%, Bargain 46%, Cultural Etiquette 18%, Electrical Repair 37%, Library Use 25%, Lore (Oceans & Shipwrecks) 45%, Mechanical Repair 68%, Meteorology 36%, Oceanography 67%, Operate Trawler 36%, Other Language (English) 35%, SCUBA Operation 88%, Swim 75%, Underwater Archaeology 59%.

Kenta

5'9". Kenta is a rugged sailor with deeply tanned skin resembling wrinkled leather. He has a few missing teeth and scraggly hair. He is Ainu, one of the original Caucasoid inhabitants of the Japanese islands and now relegated to living on tribal reservations in frigid Hokkaido. The sea in his blood. Kenta is atypical for his people and is trying to eke out a marginal living in Okinawa as a seafarer where another unique people, the Okinawans, were forced into integration with the ethnic Japanese in the nineteenth century.

KENTA, Age 46, Ainu Ship Captain

STR 14	CON 13	SIZ 15	INT 11	POW 14
DEX 14	APP 08	EDU 07	SAN 87	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Bargain 57%, Folklore (Ainu) 37%, History (Ainu) 35%, Mechanical Repair 47%, Pilot Fishing Vessel 86%, Navigate (Ocean) 57%, Other Language (Japanese) 65%, Swim 65%.

Konta, Kenta's Cousin

5'9". A sturdy Ainu man for his size, the quiet and shy Konta is content to let his cousin be in charge of ship operations. However, Konta is a hard working and responsible shipmate. Kenta couldn't imagine sailing without him.

KONTA

STR 15	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 09	POW 15
DEX 12	APP 10	EDU 08	SAN 85	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Kumu, kenta's son

5'10". An eager and sturdy young Ainu man, he already sports a dark tan from years in the sun. Kumu barely speaks his people's mother tongue and is more comfortable with Japanese in daily dialogue. He is learning the ropes from his father and hopes one day to captain his own boat in order to send money back to his family in Hokkaido as his father does now.

KUMU, Sailor, Son of Captain Kenta

STR 14	CON 14	SIZ 15	INT 10	POW 13
DEX 10	APP 11	EDU 08	SAN 89	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Scroll Four: The Six Realms

The dreaded Aku-Shin Kage manifests.

SECTION ONE:

INHABITANTS OF THE REALMS

Wherein the denizens of the numerous realms of creation are described.

As you know, beloved, we incarnate in the Six Realms of Desire: today we are humankind, tomorrow through ignorance perhaps an oni fiend, the next through good merit, a goddess. But always trapped, no escape is there from rebirth except through enlightenment to the true nature of reality, unseen and unknowable. It is easy to mistakenly believe, so wrapped up in the pain and suffering of rebirth, that this is all there is. This world is illusion. There exist things beyond time. Beyond desire. Know this as surely as you see me now.

—Shākyamuni Buddha on his deathbed,
The Forbidden Sutra.

This section is organized according to the Buddhist belief in six realms of existence. The most exalted realm is listed first and the vilest last with the rest in descending order. Entries on the inhabitants of each realm that might be of interest to keepers and investigators alike can be found within the realm they are native to, but that doesn't mean they can't travel to the Earth Realm and snack on those seeking answers to the unanswerable.

The Six Realms in Mythos Cosmology

Long time players and keepers might be wondering how the Six Realms fit into the existing Cthulhu Mythos framework. The easiest way may be to fold them into other well known dimensions, with the Six Realms simply being a Buddhist perception of what Westerners see as the Dreamlands and such. The various Jigoku could certainly be pockets in the Underworld of the Dreamlands. Tengoku could be a dimension immediately adjacent to and accessible from the Dreamlands. Yomi, the realm of the dead, the Ethereal Plane adjacent to Earth where ghosts dwell. Many gaunts are possibly aspects of Great Old Ones and so reside in distant places in the cosmos accessible only by portals and Gateways. Nichijō is actually outside of time and space where the Outer Gods like Azathoth reign.

Optionally, rather than placing the Six Realms of Desire entirely within pre-existing Cthulhu Mythos dimensions, keepers might consider them separate and unique dimensions well known only in the Asian continent. This expands the Cthulhu Mythos and the places for investigators to explore. The thing to remember is that all of the Six Realms are accessible from Earth . . . but only by using the right keys and rituals to open the portals, of course.

Within each realm section, entries are alphabetical and follow the standard entry format found in "Creatures of the Mythos" and "Deities of the Mythos" in the main *Call of Cthulhu* rules. All entries also bear the classification of Outer God, Great Old One, Elder God, independent race, or servitor. These should be taken loosely and used as a basis of comparison except where an actual Cthulhu Mythos creature is cited. Beings within the Japanese mythology have their own internal pecking order based on where they reside within the realms.

The Six Realms of Desire

Natives of each of the lowest layers of existence.

Realm of Heavenly Beings/Tengoku: Bliss, pleasure. A place of pure pleasure and revelry. Devas, deities, kami-sama, the Jade Emperor, and the kings of the four directions reside here.

Realm of Humans: Earth. Mankind. All sentient beings. Where we now exist.

Animal Kingdom: Raw instincts. Also on Earth, but these creatures are locked in the instinctive, survival-only mindset of the animal world.

Realm of Asuras: Evil and anger. Like Tengoku, but constant wars and strife keep the prideful and selfish asuras happy. Yōkai, tsukumogami, are from here but often visit Earth.

Realm of Hungry Spirits: The gaki, the hungry ghosts. Limbo. The Ethereal Plane. The Land of the Dead. Yomi. The Chinese Yellow Springs; all of these places exist here. Hungry ghosts and restless spirits roam the misty landscape. Emma-Ō, also known as Yama, is the king of Yomi and judge of the dead.

The Hells, Jigoku: Pain, torture. Sixteen hells: eight hot, eight cold. In each hell, oni torture the damned repeatedly for millennia with all manner of implements of destruction. Emma-Ō also rules this realm.

Outer Realms

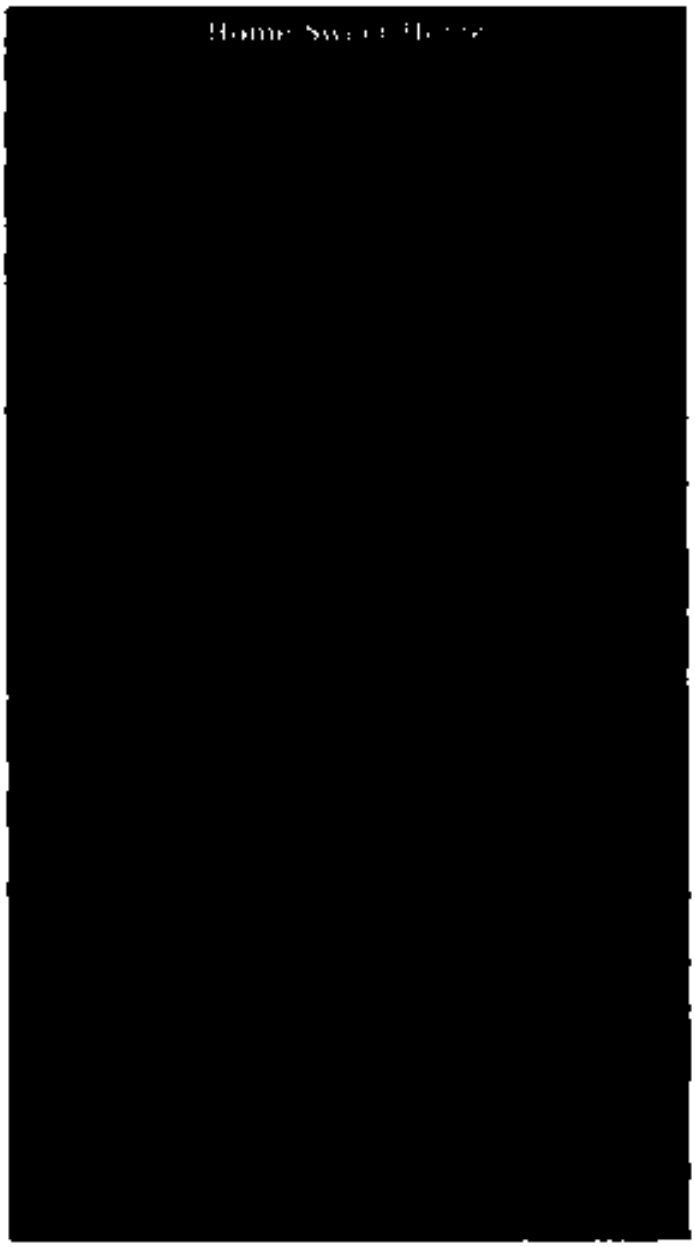
Nirvana/The Pure Lands: Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and the enlightened dwell here.

Japanese Cosmology

Where is a Heaven not Heavenly and a Hell not Hellish?

The most practical Japanese consideration for existence beyond the visible world is "Where do people go after they die?" "What becomes of my beloved ancestor?" The Japanese formulated an answer with the native Shinto religion's realm of *Yomi*, the land of the dead, where spirits go who don't have family to honor their memory. A much more sophisticated model of the universe arrived with the importation of Buddhism from the Asian continent, a belief best fully integrated into the Japanese worldview.

In India, where Buddhism was formulated, the Hindu faith held that when every living thing dies it is reborn. The cycle of life and death is repeated again and again, endlessly. This cycle, samsara or "the transmigration of the soul," is better known in the West as reincarnation. Buddhism accepted this belief and took it further by saying that, based on the degree of enlightenment and accumulated karma, we are reborn into one of the six different states of existence, also called the *six realms of desire*, or more often, *the six paths*. We are



doomed to continually incarnate forever within these realms, moving up and down in these worlds, but never escaping the trap of desire. Only by achieving enlightenment and freeing ourselves from the shackles of karma like the Buddha, can we can be freed of the eternal suffering of incarnation.

The Six Realms, from the "best" in the "worst," include the Realm of Heavenly Beings, the Realm of Humans, the Realm of Animals, the Realm of Asuras, the Realm of Hungry Spirits, and lastly, Jigoku. The highest state within the known universe is the Realm of Heavenly Beings, where gods and devas reside in absolute bliss and happiness. Below is the Realm of Humans in which we have joy but also hardship. Buddhists consider Earth a good place as it offers free will not found in the lower realms. The Realm of Animals also exists on the same plane as humans, but animals only experience the reality of the primal drives and urges of survival—they do not have the luxury of higher reasoning.

Underneath the Earth Realm is the Realm of Asuras, the polar opposite of the Heavenly Realm. Call comic dictators if you will, but while their raw power is god-like to the average man, devas and asuras are inferior to mortals in that they lack the free will to change their fate. In the sub-basement of reality is the Realm of Hungry Spirits wherein reside the dead. The older Shinto realm of Yomi is also found here. Amongst these lost spirits are souls of the vicious as well as vile effluvia to contend. In the very bottom levels of reality are the realms of Jigoku, the hells, where souls go to burn off bad karmic debt from evil and ignorant actions.

Nirvana and the Pure Lands

BOSATSU (boh-sah-tsu), Greater Independent Race

Sanskrit/Japanese: Bodhisattva/Bosatsu

At any time in the universe there are a small number of entities that refrain from attaining complete enlightenment and ascension to Nirvana. Their reason: to help other mortals along the path. As emissaries of the Lord Buddha, they carry out his will as departure to Nirvana makes direct intervention in the Six Realms impossible for the enlightened one. Bosatsu are sentient beings independent of the Buddha with a special concern or promise that they focus all their energies upon. Most include the promise of enlightenment for less fortunate people. Bosatsu are said to have a 99% complete understanding of the workings of the universe and thus are able to command great power to affect their work on Earth. (In game terms, bosatsu have a 99% Cthulhu Mythos rating.) Bosatsu only appear in consecrated temples and then only after hours of meditation or fasting and can easily be mistaken for hallucinations. It's possible that if a supplicant makes a mistake or is not totally pure in thought, they will summon something else, much more helpful and dangerous.

Bodhisattva manifest as radiant glowing beings composed of gold plasma energy. Their stature is quite imposing, usually towering above normal mortals. Usually, they appear as rendered in statues and paintings for the benefit of the viewer. These androgynous beings can appear male or female at the natural inclination of the viewer. Another unsettling feature of their materialization is that each person sees their own truth and so the bosatsu's appearance looks different to

each viewer. People from other religions may confuse bosatsu with angels or some other type of ethereal being within their belief system.

CULT: Though certain Buddhist followers have their favorite bosatsu, these beings actively discourage specific worship in favor of learning the teachings of the Buddha.

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS: Bosatsu have on occasion bequeathed enchantments, advice, and knowledge to devoted followers on the path to enlightenment.

BOSATSU, Emissaries of Compassion

STR n/a	CON n/a	SIZ varies	INT 50	POW 50
DEX n/a	APP 20	Move 35	HP 100	

Damage Bonus: none.

Armor: None. Immune to all attacks except those by beings from outside of time and space.

Weapons: Bestow Karma 85%, Instant Enlightenment 85%

Spells: Any desired, but will never bestow Mythos spells upon followers, just Mythos knowledge. (However, they may grant spells for travel, increasing wisdom, or other spells that do not enable violence or pain of any kind against other sentient beings.)

Sanity Loss: None. Humans traveling with a bodhisattva to the Buddha Realms of Nirvana or the Pure Lands may experience things incomprehensible to the unprepared human mind, thereby incurring a Sanity Roll. Jodo, 1D20; Nehan, 1D100.

JIZO (GEE-ZOW)

English Equivalent: Womb of the Earth

Description: Jizō continues to work here on Earth to save others who are trying to become Buddhas also. He is in charge of saving others on the physical plane in the interim between the demise of historical Gautama Buddha in 300 B.C.E. and the arrival of the future Miroku Buddha. This bosatsu is quite popular with common people and is known affectionately as "O-Jizō-Sama." In fact, he is one of the most popular bosatsu in Japanese Buddhism.

A red cloth bib is tied to an image of Jizō by a Buddhist worshiper hoping for Jizō's favor. Known as the "Earth Protector," Jizō is prayed to to ease the pain of those babies that were aborted, stillborn, or lost by misfortune. Mothers who have lost a child will tie a bib on a Jizō statue and pray for their lost one. It is considered important that each mother have her own image of Jizō to dedicate, hence small shrine forests of the bosatsu. Often, mothers leave a small toy or candy at the foot of the Jizō statue. Many statues of Jizō have offering piles stacked around them composed of objects loved by children.

ROADSIDE JIZŌ STATUES WITH BIBS

Disguises/Forms: Jizō is usually depicted as a monk with a jewel in one hand and a staff in the other.

Residence: Earth, the physical plane.

Sponsorship: Jizō has made a vow to aid and benefit all suffering beings. This vow has made him a popular object of veneration since the Heian Era in Japan and he is often found in the company of native Shinto deities. He is regarded as the savior of children and the souls trapped in Jigoku.

KANNON (CAN-NON)

Chinese/Sanskrit: Kuan-yin, Avalokiteswara

Description: This bosatsu's name means "one who looks down upon the world and sees everything without hindrance" or "one who observes and listens to the cries of the suffering in the world." She refuses to accept Nirvana because she considers such a goal selfish with the great majority of people still unenlightened. This sacrifice is seen as ultimate compassion and a willingness to help those in distress. Mentioned in the *Heart Sutra*, Kannon looks down upon the world and is equipped with many powers and abilities to help its inhabitants. Mention of Kannon also appears in the text of the *Lotus Sutra*.

KANNON

Disguises/Forms: Though often depicted as male, in Japan and later in China, Kannon is often rendered in female form due to the fact Kannon represents compassion. The statues of this Bodhisattva often feature a thousand arms to help the masses, or a thousand eyes that represent the bosatsu's all encompassing compassion and salvation. In Japan, most people think of Kannon in terms of a mother figure and yearn for her loving warmth and understanding.

Residence: Kannon is also thought to have a Pure Land called Potalaka. (Mount Futara/Nikko in Tochigi Prefecture of Japan is a possible entryway.)

Sponsorship: Compassion. She is also a protector of those in danger. Those who wish for her help need only chant her invocation, the mantra "Om mani padme hum." Amongst all the Buddhist beings, this Bodhisattva is the most likely to be encountered by a human being.

MIROKU (ME-ROW-COO)

Sanskrit Equivalent: Maitreya

Description: Miroku is the future Buddha expected to arrive on Earth at the curp of the age of Mappo, and who resides at this time in the Tusita Heaven. It became a common belief that it was rather easy to reach the Tusita Heaven and even an ordinary person might get there through the proper religious training. After Gautama's death and extinction into Nehan, it was Miroku, still a bosatsu in this reality, who continued to spread Buddhist teaching. Unfortunately, the cult of Kannon overtook his in the eighth century C.E. and has led to his decline in popularity ever since.

MIROKU

(At the Keeper's option, this legend about Miroku coming to Earth at the "right time" can actually be a distorted myth about a Great Old One with misguided Buddhists actually summoning a monstrosity instead of the hoped-for savior.)

Disguises/Forms: This Bodhisattva is portrayed as seated with one leg resting on the other knee and the right hand raised touching his chin.

Residence: Tusita Heaven

Sponsorship: Maitreya's name means benevolence.

Botsu (BOHT-SUE), Outer God

He who holds open the threshold from the outside.

Sanskrit/English: Shākyamuni/Boddha, The Nirmāna-kāya, Gautama Siddhartha, Enlightened One, Lion of the Shākyas, The Seeker.

The Buddha is an entity of a timeless nature. Originally a historical personage, by the process of enlightenment the Buddha awakened to the true nature of the universe and entered into a state of existence called Nirvana. Nirvana is beyond the Six Realms of time, space and the endless cycle of human suffering.

Once Siddhartha was a mortal seeking the secrets of the universe through intense meditation in the shade of a Bodhi tree. Just before unlocking the ultimate truth of the universe, he was tempted by the entity Mara, who showed the Seeker the Gateway to Nirvana. Mara offered quick enlightenment to the timeless realm of Nehan, thus blocking entrance for anyone else. Resisting self-fulfillment, at that instant Siddhartha reached full understanding of the cosmos and became the Lord Buddha, the enlightened one, the Body of Manifestation (Nirmāna-Kāya), a physical incarnation of the Timeless Cosmic Buddha on Earth. Upon his physical death seventy years later, the Shākyamuni's essence ascended to the Outer Realm of Nirvana and joined with the Absolute Body (Dharma-Kāya) of the Cosmic Buddha. Before the Gate could close, he barred it open and has since kept the portal open for others. This is why Azathoth occasionally manifests on Earth, but it also allows serious seekers of transcendence to find the path more easily than the first seeker. All must still confront Mara before they may reach final satori.

There are an infinite number of Buddhas, each watching over each dimension of existence. Every 3000 years a being attains Living Buddhahood, Nirmāna-Kāya, and renews the teachings of Dharma to mortals on Earth. This Living Buddha heralds in a new age and then ascends to Nirvana to merge with the timeless Cosmic Buddha, Dharma-Kāya. Almost 3000 years have passed since Gautama's passing and the time is very near for the next Living Buddha, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, to manifest on Earth. The Lord Buddha usually manifests on the Earth realm as a mental projection to those already on the path to enlightenment. When the Lord Buddha chooses to appear before a seeker in a comprehensible form, it is as a glowing unmoving man seated in lotus position, exactly like he is depicted in temple statues. Hovering in mid air, a ghostly purple flame blazes in a nimbus behind him, which is cool to the touch. Oft-times, a court of attendant devas and bodhisattvas swirl around the seated figure like a living mandala. Beyond time and space, The Buddha appears as an un-living statue. The only visible motions come in bursts or time jumps like a strobe-camera still: often taking shape as a new *mudra* (hand position) or facial expression. Changes are instantaneous; no movement can be witnessed from the old position to the new. Witnessing this may be cause for a 1D10 SAN check. Existing beyond time and space, taking physical form only in dire urgency, bosatsu must spread his teachings on Earth. Total non-interference is the price of total enlightenment.

CULT: Buddha's teachings are institutionalized as the religion of Buddhism and thus are accepted today as a mainstream world religion. Worshipers follow the Buddha's message, not the being itself, and those that follow in his footsteps can also become Buddhas, bodhisattvas, or exhibit preternatural powers after many lifetimes based on the level of enlightenment attained. Some believe that a Buddha represents the pinnacle of all that a human being can attain in this universe. The teachings even state that each being already contains a Buddha within only waiting to awaken.

BOTSU/LORD BUDDHA

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS: The Lord Buddha does not engage in conflict of any form. His only weapon is to bestow wisdom to the unenlightened. Having attained mastery of all aspects of the Six Realms of Existence, he exists within and outside of known reality. He can grow or shrink to infinite size and is unaffected by all types of weapons. For truly malignant entities that choose to engage him, he can cast the spells Bestow Karma or Instant Enlightenment.

LORD BUDDHA, the Enlightened One

STR n/a	CON n/a	SIZ varies	INT 100	POW 100
DEX n/a	APP 20	Move n/a*	HP n/a	

** The Buddha does not move in conventional ways; rather he phases into the physical plane.*

Damage Bonus: none.

Armor: None. Immune to all attacks except those of other beings also from outside of time and space.

Weapon: Bestow Karma 95%, Instant Enlightenment 95%.

Spells: Any he wants, but he never bestows Mythos spells on followers, just Mythos knowledge. (However, he may grant spells for travel, increasing wisdom, or other spells that do not enable violence or pain of any kind against other sentient beings.)

Sanity Loss: To see his form, 0/1D10. Humans traveling with him to the Buddha Realms of Nirvana or The Pure lands may experience things incomprehensible to the unprepared human mind, thereby incurring a Sanity roll. Jodo 1D20; Nehan 1D100. This could easily lead to insanity; after all, enlightenment is about discarding human illusions regarding the nature of the universe.

THE DAIBUTSU, OR GREAT BRONZE BUDDHA

Tengoku: The Heavenly Realms

The strangest beliefs in the existence of heavens, hells, and all the realms between came to Japan on the heels of the introduction of Buddhism from the main continent of Asia around 700 C.E. Some influence from Taoist and Confucian beliefs also spilled over into these concepts. In addition, it should be pointed out that the Japanese, before Buddhism's arrival, already believed in a realm of the dead, called Yomi, within the existing native religion of Shinto.

Mount Sumeru

Hidden within the Tibetan Himalayas near the Sacred Mount Kailas are portals to the Heavens. For the worthy, a transparent stair allows ascent to the base of a vast hovering mountain invisible to the Earth Dimension. Within is a paradise of perfect weather and quiet green gardens in stark contrast to the outside icy winds of the 20,000' elevation in the Himalayas. Atop the mountain is a great golden temple modeled in the Tibetan style of bright reds and yellows. The spire of the stupa on the temple is often mistaken as the North Star in the Himalayan skies. In the skies above the peaks reside the various Heavens stacked one on top of the other in infinite dimensional layers, reachable only by specific portals and spells.

Homeland of esoteric knowledge, from this place lamas and ancient beings from the Hyperborean Age disseminate wisdom to the world at large through emissaries. The race of bird-men tengu, called *tien kou* by the Chinese, dwell high in the mountains and guard almost all Gates to the Land of Bliss. These Gates take the form of spiral mandalas etched into the ground. To be transported to the transparent stairs, a traveler must start on the outside of the spiral diagram and walk inward toward the center, all the while concentrating upon the destination (Roll the character's INT x4 or less for the ritual to succeed.)

Inhabitants

Avatars: In addition to the resident gods, the Realm of Heavenly Beings is also known to be a dwelling for certain avatars of the Mythos. As with most places Mythos beings exist, avatars infest the heavens as they see fit. Most well known to the Japanese is the Aku-Shin Kage, The Dark Warlord, one of the thousand forms of Nyarlathotep. Another avatar present is Mara, the Dweller on the Threshold, the original tempter of the Buddha as he tried to attain enlightenment.

A word of warning . . .

Literally translated from native Japanese into English, Tengoku (ten-goh-coo) means "heaven," and Jigoku (jee-goh-coo) "hell." It quickly becomes problematic using these English equivalents, however. The Western English labels of Heaven and Hell are very loaded: they evoke instant imagery of harps and angels for the former or perhaps fire and brimstone for the latter. In Asia there are no angels and heaven is not a reward for the just. The English translations are presented here for ease of understanding, but perhaps keepers might consider that the native Japanese names of Tengoku and Jigoku would better serve within the context of the game.

Kami, Japanese Gods: Kami, or gami, are a blend of powerful ancestor spirits and deified forces of nature who watch over, or threaten, the affairs of men. All kami must be given offerings and treated with the proper respect, for even the weakest kami can wreak havoc when angered. All kami claim the breadth of the Six Realms of Desire their playground, but what could be termed a Shinto pantheon call the Heaven of Yamato, just above the Six Abodes, their home. Here, a perpetual golden age of Japan exists in a land of rolling plains and majestic peaks. Amaterasu the sun goddess is the pantheon matriarch with her brother Susano-Wo the storm god, a mischievous companion. Many other kami who represent deified concepts, such as war, fertility, luck, and wisdom also live here.

The Taoist Immortals: Somewhat different from the other beings, the Taoist immortals live in a great stepped palace nestled in the clouds in the center of the Heaven of the Four Great Kings. The immortals are formerly mortal beings who have harnessed the natural Taoist forces of the universe and attained freedom from death. The best known are the Eight Taoist Immortals. Alchemists who have developed the Red Powder of Immortality must find the Ivory Stair and ascend it to ask permission of the Jade Emperor to complete the final steps needed to achieve immortality and join their ranks. (See also pages 114–115 and 221–223.)

Forbidden Knowledge

The Heavens are not a place for the living or the dead. The deities that dwell there seldom welcome intruding humans with open arms. (However, they do tolerate the peaceful dead sent there by Emma-O—see pages 244–245.) No matter how elevated their status, Asian deities still suffer the frailties of emotion and desire because they too dwell within the Six Realms. This means that, depending upon a god whims of the moment, a human guest is as likely to be smited out of anger as to be lavished with attention out of concealed lust.

Most humans who visit this realm are either very heroic or very foolish, but vast fonts of hidden knowledge, guarded by the devas, are the reason most are drawn to the Heavenly Realm.

Any Mythos spell or secret can be acquired in the libraries of the Kings of the Four Directions. A traveler must answer a riddle and the king of that palace will allow access to his libraries. Failure means transformation into a servitor. The information in each library corresponds to the sphere of guardianship of that king: The Eastern King grants protective and enchantment spells; the Southern King grants spells of raw power, control, and binding; the Western King grants divination and Scrying spells; and the Northern King grants Contact, Call, and Summoning spells.

Another common destination for humans, especially for alchemists seeking immortality, is the palace of the Jade Emperor. This route is also fraught with peril, as the seeker is invariably insane by the time he gets to the palace, and the Jade Emperor brooks no fools.

Optional Rule: GATEs to tengoku

The spell Create Gate and all its variants are quite effective in bridging the dimensions of Earth and the Heavenly Realm. Optionally, the keeper can craft a specific time or place that Gateways open to the various Heavens. A location somehow relevant to the destination is suggested: a Torii temple for access to the Jade Emperor; a Shinto torii archway for access to the kami's heaven of Yamato; a statue of a guardian god leading to the Heaven of the Four Great Kings; and so forth.

HISUI TENNOH (HE-SUE-E TEN-NO), ELDER GOD

English: The Jade Emperor

I climbed the misty stair hovering in mid-air, and in spite of the amazing vista around me, I could only think about what lay ahead. Upon reaching the Jade Palace, an endless row of delicately carved jade statues, each easily worth a king's ransom, stretched out before me. Coming to a similarly carved throne in the center of the abode sat the end of my long quest. This entity could only be royalty from the bearing and poise he held. He seemed a statue himself if not for the slow heaving of his obese frame. It was when I recited my speech and I felt my flesh begin to painfully solidify into jade that I realized the folly of my journey. Now, I truly was immortal for eternity, in stone.

The origins of the Jade Emperor are unclear as he seems to have always sat upon the Jade Throne in the Citadel of the Taoist Immortals. Though never leaving his palace in the Heaven of the Four Great Kings, this elder god is known due to infrequent dealings with mortals.

Hisui Tennoh, the head of the of the Taoist court, is the personification of the cosmic polar opposites of Yin (dark) and Yang (light) forces, called *in* and *yō* in Japanese, which flow through every aspect of the universe. A being of pure Tao, unmanifested reality, he is a force flowing through all life, and giving breath to all creation. Immensely powerful, the Jade Emperor follows the Taoist Wu Wei—the way of achieving action through minimal effort—and so rarely intervenes in the natural flow of events. In appearance, his garb is ancient imperial Chinese court attire with a red silk robe and a well manicured goatee. His form is highly obese with extremely long curling finger nails.

CULT: In the past, he was widely worshiped throughout Asia, though not in the modern age except by eccentric Taoist alchemists aspiring to immortality. Those who do worship him do so for the primal energy of possibility he represents.

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Bestow Immortality: Alchemists who successfully gain audience at his throne must passionately argue why they should be allowed to violate the natural cycle of life and death. The speech must give a valid reason to allow an exception to the Tao, spoken in a respectful and deferential tone so as not to offend the emperor. Knowing Chinese court etiquette and language is helpful. If angered, the emperor practices Wu Wei and does nothing: the untransmuted Red Powder of Immortality runs its natural course, hardening the flesh and transforming the aspirant into a white jade statue, who then joins other victims now lining the halls of the emperor's palace. The aspirant is immortal but composed of jade stone, aware and insane for eternity. The clever and wise gain Taoist immortality, with the ability to recover from even mortal wounds. In return, they must practice a breathing exercise two hours each day and bring tribute, something of personal significance, to the Jade Emperor's court every twelfth anniversary of receiving the gift. The longer the immortal lives, the harder the task becomes.

Impose Balance of Ki: Hisui Tennoh can restore the balance of the flow of ki, the primal life force of the universe, in any being. The effect is harmless for those already in balance, but for others this innocuous ability is devastating. (When this effect is invoked, the victim is first allowed to make a Luck roll to resist; a success lets the investigator run away unaffected.) Failing the Luck roll, a POW resistance roll must be made versus the investigator's own POW score as the Jade Emperor uses the victim's ki against them. If the character fails both of these rolls, any one natural ability or skill that is "out of balance" or extreme is averaged with others. Whether the effect is permanent or temporary is up to the keeper. For example, a brainy professor who is also thin and frail in constitution will gain a healthy body but at the expense of his exceptional intelligence.

Manifest the Improbable: The Jade Emperor embodies the pure primal force of probability in the universe. Using the analogy of the modern Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle of modern physics, he is able to alter probability in his favor, and in extreme cases, to accomplish the highly unlikely. Those who worship him in this day and age ask for his favor in this realm, though this is not really "luck" per se but Tao attunement with cosmic forces. Conforming to the law of Yin and Yang, it also brings the polar opposite into being, no matter how high the odds, but other than this condition anything is possible. Bringing the dead back to life or revealing a foe's weakness were favors sought from Hisui Tennoh by mythical heroes in ages past, often granted only after performing a nearly impossible quest set forth by the emperor himself. The irony is the quest itself often succeeded in performing the requested favor, the quintessence of Wu Wei.

A weaker spell of the same name is available to practicing Taoists by simply smashing a small jade image of the Jade Emperor while praying; this costs 1 magic point. The caster performs a Luck roll while smashing the statue; if that roll is successful then the caster may re-roll any failed roll from the last two rounds. ***Note:*** *jade statues are quite expensive to go around smashing, and total failure of that roll gains the caster 1 point of Cthulhu Mythos.*

Optional Rule: iso onna flesh

Legend has it that those who feast upon the flesh of an oni-onna yokai gain immortality. The truth to these tales is that only 10% gain this gift. 20% transform into iso onna with legs, and the rest die horribly as they organs liquefy in a matter of minutes after eating the poisonous flesh. But the 10% who do succeed in this suicidal method to immortality, wear their characteristics and abilities in all ways as Taoist immortals except that they do not have to pay homage to the Jade Emperor and often have differing religious and philosophical backgrounds. As far as skills, most have empathy as peasants or common people and so rarely have any Mythos knowledge or spell ability.

HISUI TENNOH, THE JADE EMPEROR

THE JADE EMPEROR, Ruler of the Taoist Heavens

STR 15	CON 100	SIZ 20	INT 60	POW 50
DEX 10	APP 14	Move 10		HP 60*

**If killed, the Jade emperor reappears upon his throne in 1D5 days.*

Damage Bonus +1D6.

Weapons none.

Armor none. Immune to all attacks by mortal beings.

Spells see entry, above.

Sanity Loss 1D6/1D8 to see the Jade Emperor.

The Taoist Immortals, Shinjin Race

Japanese Furoosa no Dekyō

The path to immortality holds many incorrect paths and dead-ends. Those seeking immortality must first create the Red Powder and consume it. If not properly constructed by the alchemist, the heavy metals in the mixture drive them insane or kill them outright. Next, they must find the correct rite or incantation to summon and ascend the Ivory Stair (also known as the Steps to Immortality), which only appear during certain planetary alignments and eclipses. If the wrong spell is used, Quachil Uttaus may be accidentally summoned. Then they must get beyond the Guardian Kings of the Four Directions, as proclaim to an original century the demand for immortality before the Jade Emperor himself. Only the ambitious, power hungry and cruel seek the Hisui Tenoshi's audience.

With the exception of highly radiant bodies and wisdom acquired from great age, these beings are almost human in their behavior and motivations. A notable difference in their psychological makeup results from their longevity: their perception of the scale of time in comparison to mortals is greatly skewed. When using a Taoist immortal in a scenario, it is suggested that the keeper let the immortality show in Taoist pursuits and attitudes as well as intricate plans that take decades or centuries to unfold.

REQUIRED SPELLS FOR IMMORTALITY

- **Enchant Elixir:** this spell creates the Red Powder of Immortality necessary for Taoist alchemists seeking immortality from the Jade Emperor.
- **Ascend the Stairs of Immortality:** used by Taoist alchemists when they wish to find the Ivory Stair to the Jade Emperor quickly.

CULT: Some Taoists revere these beings and alchemists aspire to become a member of their ranks.

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Bodily Regeneration: Only the most dedicated and clever Taoist alchemists gain physical immortality. With immortality comes the ability to recover even from wounds that would bring the alchemist to –15 hit points. Beyond –15 HP they die and reincarnate. They can also regenerate the loss of up to 50% of their body via misfortune. Lost hit points regenerate at a rate of 1 HP per minute. If brought to –5 HP or less an immortal is inert and "dead" until they regenerate to –2 HP. A Taoist immortal never ages.

Immortals must practice a special Taoist breathing exercise two hours every day and bring tribute to the Jade Emperor's court every twelfth anniversary of receiving the gift of eternal life. The gift must be something of personal significance to the giver. The longer the immortal lives and the more jaded he or she becomes, the harder the task.

Reincarnation: If reduced to below –15 hit points, an immortal will reincarnate in a new body and grow to adulthood, with 70% of the old

memories and abilities of his or her past immortal self. These memories and abilities return upon the advent of puberty. Until then, the child may appear to have déjà vu and be cognizant of facts he or she should by all rights not know. These children also have distorted nightmarish dreams of past events throughout their young lives. When the immortal memories surface at puberty, there is sometimes a conflict of personalities between the young innocent and the ageless immortal entity. Upon adulthood, he or she must perform the Ritual of Immortality again as a supplicant to the Jade Emperor, to regain immortal status. Failure to do so may result in the embryonic immortal being put in an insane asylum for multiple personalities or delusional episodes.

High Skill Ability: By virtue of their long lives and ability to reincarnate with their memories intact, Taoist immortals acquire high proficiency in certain skills that they choose to pursue. Not all immortals are the stereotypical alchemists or sorcerers; some come upon their gift of eternal life by happenstance and so a few are skilled warriors, scholars, or even thieves. When creating an immortal non-player character, roll 5D6 for EDU and EDU x80 to determine skill points to distribute. One or two skills of special interest to the immortal are at 99%.

TAOIST IMMORTALS, Cheaters of Death

char.	*rolls*	*averages*
STR, CON, SIZ, DEX	3D6	10–11
POW, EDU	5D6	17–18

Move 12 HP 10

Av. Damage Bonus: none.

Armor: none, but have bodily regeneration (see above).

Weapon: Punch 30%, damage 1D3+db

Skill Points: EDU x80, plus 2D6 Cthulhu Mythos skill points

Spells: keeper's discretion. Taoist alchemists will know Enchant Elixir and Ascend Stairs of Immortality.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see an immortal regenerate.

KAMI-SAMA (KAH-ME-SA-MAH) ELDER GODS

As the storm raged around our group, the frequent lightning illuminated a large ghostly form hovering above the treetops near the shrine. We all gasped at the apparition, which seemed to crackle pure malevolence. Just before another lightning flash faded, I plainly saw the spirit point at Fickly. Within the time it took to fill my lungs to scream, a bolt of lightning struck the poor man, leaving a pungent scorched mass at our horrified feet. I involuntarily dropped my torch as I ran for the shrine gates. No research grant was worth this.

—extract from Shintaro Watanabe's unpublished memoirs.

Kami worship is a form of basic animism, religious belief in the power of nature, which developed in most cultures as the first expression of religion. In Japan, this belief system formed into the unique religion known as Shinto and was never supplanted by a more socialized and institutionalized religion as paganism was by Christianity in Western Europe. Buddhism did later arrive on Japan's shores but coexisted and integrated with Shinto rather than replacing it. Most Japanese are able to separate the two belief systems with Shinto dealing with the life cycle and kami, and Buddhism taking care of matters of death.

Greater kami are natural spiritual manifestations of elements like mountains and oceans, or of concepts like war and beauty, that have developed an independent life from millennia of worship, becoming living personifications of their domain. Lesser kami are much more limited, representing the spirit or soul of a place, a famous person, or even a heroic ancestor. All kami are inextricably intertwined with human worship. Kami obtain sustenance from worship and belief, in the form of magic points sacrificed to them by worshipers.

Kami are beings of two natures, in line with the Taoist influence of Yin and Yang. Kami can be divided into *arami-tama*, malevolent deities, and *nigimi-tama*, beneficent deities. On their best behavior, properly worshiped kami yield gifts in the form of blessings, enchantments, and physical manifestations. To displease even a relatively beneficent kami is to incur the wrath of an intensely passionate spirit: crops wither on the vine, fierce storms rage, plagues batter populations, or the ground quakes with anger. Perhaps for this reason, most modern Japanese are just as apt to leave kami alone and work to keep their wrath in check by placation as to ask favors of them.

There is some (accurate) speculation that greater kami may be soul remnants of powerful sorcerers of the ancient continent of Mu. These wizards sacrificed themselves casting massive Gate spells to save refugees in the great exodus from that land, which was sunk as punishment for the Great Experiment. Before expiring, they performed a final powerful rite that ensured that they could watch over the descendants of their heritage for all time.

EVIL LESSER KAMI

KAMI CREATION: There exists a spell "Create Ancestor Spirit" that enables a Shinto priest to strip the soul of a living human and bind it into the shrine as an ancestral kami. An uji-gami is one such deity that can be created thus. Not all potential clan fathers go to this task willingly or (at the time) even knowingly. In the old days there were times when a crossroads required a guardian kami and the first hapless wayfarer became drafted for this dark purpose. Moreover, kami are conglomerate beings. New souls can be added to strengthen the POW of a kami and when the POW rating becomes great enough they can become greater kami. The war god Hachiman is an example of this form of kami elevation.

CULT: The worship of kami-sama forms the basis of the Shinto religion native to Japan. Greater kami are worshiped in sacred shrines, *jinja* (jin-jah), consisting of massive wood building complexes situated on the earth's dragon lines, known as ley lines in the West. Lesser kami of earth and wood can usually be found enshrined in simple roadside markings of stacked rocks and sacred rope marking the site, while ancestral kami are worshiped from elaborate family shrines within clan households.

Worship of kami involves the voluntary transfer of magic points, usually only 1 or 2 points at a time, through the symbolic placement of offerings such as fresh food and drink at the shrine altar. These donated magic points are regained normally from sleep. POW can be unintentionally donated instead of magic points if a kami is desperate or mentally unstable. Coma or even death can result if a human continues worship under these circumstances. Kami naturally regenerate POW like a person does magic points as long as they are being worshiped. Less powerful kami are much more cautious with POW use. Note that greater kami have 60 POW on average; this should be viewed as a reserve that is constantly being replenished by unconscious veneration by worshipers.

Types of Kami

AMATSU-KAMI (AH-MAHT-SUE), GREATER KAMI, PERSONIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Influence: Anywhere within the Japanese national borders.

Places of Worship: Public and private shrines, usually multiple sites located on Dragon Paths.

Special Abilities: Control the Elements, Call Great Old One, Contact any being, ESP abilities.

Well Known Greater Kami: Amaterasu, sun goddess and head of pantheon; Susano-Wo, storm god and brother of Amaterasu; Hachiman, the god of war and martial prowess; Shi-chi-fuku-jin, the Seven Deities of Good Fortune.

KUNITSU-KAMI (COO-KNEET-SUE), LESSER KAMI, LIVING MANIFESTATIONS OF PLACES AND THINGS

Influence: Localized to a place or thing, but there can be many lesser kami of the same aspect, like mountain gods. They are the earth kami said to look after the welfare of men.

Places of Worship: Mountains, streams, ancient glades, or rice fields. Any site felt to be sacred, becomes so through belief.

Special Abilities: Control the Elements.

Well Known Lesser Kami: Yama no Kami, god of the mountain; Ta no Kami, god of the paddies; Sui-jin, god of the waters; Bimbō-gami, god of poverty; Yakubyō-gami, god of disease.

ANCESTRAL KAMI, PROTECTOR OF A CLAN, CRAFT, OR A GREAT PERSONAGE

Influence: Will protect and watch over blood descendants no matter where they choose to live in the world. Can be quite fierce and evil when protecting family interests.

Places of Worship: Resides within or around a household shrine dedicated to it, but can be worshiped by any descendant anywhere.

Special Abilities: Control the Elements, ESP abilities.

Well Known Ancestral Kami: Ieyasu Tokugawa, a former shōgun in the Edo Period, is now the ancestral kami of the Tokugawa bloodline. An ancestral kami can also watch over a school of a traditional craft—such as a ninja clan.

KAMI, Ageless Supernatural Personifications

*char.**	*greater kami* *rolls*	*lesser kami* *rolls*	*ancestral kami* *rolls*
INT	10D6+20 (55)	4D6 (14)	6D6 (21)
POW	6D10+30 (63)	5D10+10 (37–38)	5D10 (27–28)
APP	varies	as aspect	as in life
Sanity Loss	1/1D8	0/1D4	0/1D6

**Averages for each kami type are listed in parentheses.*

Weapons: POW Drain, ESP Attacks (Telekinesis, Pyrokinesis, etc.)

Armor: None. Immaterial forms.

Spells: As appropriate to kami's aspect of guardianship.

Sanity Loss: None, unless the kami takes on a fierce visage (in which case, see the characteristic listings above).

For the sample kami described below, derive their characteristics from the preceding table. Note that the more widely worshiped a kami is (as with Amaterasu), the more powerful it is.

AMATERASU (AH-MAH-TAY-RA-SUE), AMATSU-KAMI

English Equivalent: Sun goddess.

Type: Greater kami.

POW Regeneration: 10 POW/round.

Belief: National symbol of heritage and pride.

Disposition: Nigimi-tama, beneficent deity.

Places of Power: Ise Shrine, Imperial Palace.

Physical Symbols: Bronze Mirror of Imperial Regalia. The Rising Sun.

Aspect: Sun Goddess, Matron of Imperial Line, Head Deity of Japanese Pantheon.

Physical Manifestation: A radiant Japanese woman of immeasurable beauty swathed in a blindingly white kimono and backlit by the golden sun.

Worship: Amaterasu is subconsciously worshiped by all Japanese, and her history and myth are taught to young children in both school and the home. On special days of imperial significance, the emperor's family performs special rites in her name.

SUSANO-WO (SUE-SAH-NO-WO), AMATSU-KAMI

English Equivalent: Storm god.

Type: Greater kami.

POW Regeneration: 5 POW/round.

Belief: By those still dependent on the land or sea.

Disposition: Arami-tama, malevolent to neutral.

Places of Power: The sky.

Physical Symbols: The jeweled sword of the Imperial Regalia, storm clouds.

Aspect: Storm god, brother of Amaterasu, lord of chaos and mischief among the Japanese pantheon.

Physical Manifestation: A strong man riding a black storm cloud and hurling bolts of lighting at the ground with a fierce visage.

Worship: While fear of this god has faded in the modern age, Susano-Wo is still seen as responsible for bad weather and is placated to keep good weather.

DOSOJIN (DOH-SEW-GIN)/ SAI NO KAMI, KUNITSU-KAMI

English Equivalent: Stone guardian.

Type: Lesser kami.

POW Regeneration: None.

Belief: Nowadays considered a trite belief.

Disposition: Nigimi-tama, beneficent to wards.

Physical Symbols: Roadside statue of seated monk.

Places of Power: Any regional boundary or crossroad.

Aspect: Guardian deity of roads and village boundaries.

Physical Manifestation: Worshiped in the form of stone images along the roadside.

Description: Sai no Kami is an ancient designation suggesting the function of obstructing or keeping out *sai* (evil spirits). The dôso-jin are often identified with the god *Sarudahiko* who guided *Ninigi no Mikoto*, the ancestor of the imperial line, to his descent to earth.

The creation of these kami usually requires the ritual sacrifice of a living person from the town or place to be guarded who is buried alive at the border of the area. The victim then becomes the kami protector, losing all human memories in the process of the transformation.

Worship: Dôso-jin also function as gods of marriage, birth, and other rituals. During the 14th and 15th of January they are decked out with New Years ornaments *(dondo)*. In some places, children go door to door asking for rice cakes *(mochi)* or other various offerings "for the dôso-jin." In a specially constructed hut *(dondo-goya/uri-goya)* the children eat mochi and sing songs.

UJI-GAMI (EW-GEE GAH-ME)

English Equivalent: Clan deity

Type: Ancestral kami (lesser)

POW Regeneration: None

Belief: By bloodline.

Disposition: Benign to wards.

Places of Power: Clan leader's household.

Aspect: Guardian deity of family/bloodline.

Physical Manifestation: In rural Japan, uji-gami refers to a specific household deity *(ya-shiki-gami)* enshrined in a small outdoor shrine *(hokora)* in the family plot. The kami appears as an idealized image of common clan attributes (long hair, same nose, etc.).

Description: Originally, this kami was the deity of a clan *(uji)*. Early Japan had many clans and members of such uji. They believed that a common ancestor looked after their interests. So the uji-gami is a founding ancestor deified and worshiped in a shrine exclusively by the clan. Sometimes the uji was not a direct ancestor of the uji but a deity closely related to it. An example of this is the Minamoto clan who adopted Hachiman, the deity of war, as their uji-gami because of the god's association with military prowess. The uji system declined from 13th to 16th centuries and by then the uji-gami came to refer to the local deity who protected all the inhabitants of a region. The uji-gami priesthood shifted to professional Shinto priests (kannushi) or to a household head chosen each year *(miyaza)*.

Worship: Only members of an uji are allowed to worship the uji-gami and service venerating the kami is led by the nominal head of the clan. This privilege is cautiously guarded, as close association with such a deity invariably grants the worshiper access to latent ESP talents. Worshipers of a single ubusu-na-gami are called *ujiko* (children of uji).

Well Known Ancestral Kami: Ieyasu Tokugawa.

AMATERASU (IN ANCIENT MUVIAN SORCERER PRIESTESS GARB)

The Earthly Realm

O-Bake-Mono

Throughout Japanese history, persistent myths and tales have been whispered about bizarre entities interested in the doings of human-kind living just beyond the veil of everyday reality. The Japanese word for these creatures is *o-bake-mono*: "o" being an honorable prefix for fear of angering such a creature, "bake," pronounced bah-kay, which means change/transform, and "mono" which means thing(s). Literally, o-bake-mono means "transforming things." In vernacular, they can also be called "o-bake," or "bake-mono" as well as many other less complementary terms by the unpleasantly surprised.

Folklore lays claim to over a million and one o-bake existing in Japan, but there are actually only several types accounting for the repeated o-bake encounters recorded throughout Japanese history. The most prevalent tales of certain bake-mono are numerous for a reason: these particular creatures actually exist. The most powerful and populous of these beings in the vicinity of the Japanese Isles are tatsu, kappa, kitsune, oni, and tengu.

O-bake have become an integral part of Japanese attitudes and have even shaped certain superstitious beliefs. The motives and purposes of these beings are unknowable to the human mind, so it can't be helped that over the eons the Japanese have sculpted legends of these beings into parodies of the human condition.

Philosophical Japanese have ascribed o-bake with affinities to the Taoist elements, for they believe o-bake to be elemental manifestations, living aspects of elemental energies with ties and abilities derived from their natural affinities. Tatsu, oriental dragons, are beings of raw power strongly tied to the elements, though they find their homes most often in fire, water, or wind. Kitsune, shapechangers that appear as foxes, are tied in a lesser degree to all thirteen Taoist elements and represent the mercurial facets of each. They consider dragons deadly enemies. Kappa, fearsome little amphibious predators, are tied with the elements of ocean and river. Oni, fiends and custodians of the hells, find ties with the Taoist elements of fire, spirit, and void. Tengu, humanoid bird-like beings, are tied to the elements of heaven, mountain, and wind.

Modern culture refuses to believe in such beings, reducing them to the content of plays or movies and the object of trinkets to be bought by tourists. But it matters not whether someone believes in o-bake for they are there, always.

In the Mythos

Of all the creatures in Japanese myth-lore, the o-bake races are perhaps the most prolific and have the highest visibility among humans. Due to their numbers, they also have much more interaction and closer ties with monsters from the Cthulhu Mythos than other Japanese creatures.

The origins of o-bake are diverse but all are mistakenly thought of as native to Japan by the modern populace. Some bake-mono are in fact spawned from the machinations of Mythos beings. The tatsu, having been created by the Mappo no Ryûjin and/or Yig, are a prime example of this. Others, like the tengu, are alien races that have adopted Earth as their home. Kappa may well be a mutation or offshoot of the deep ones.

Despite the diverse backgrounds of these races, o-bake will bow to the summoning or call of a Mythos Great Old One or Elder God, for they have not existed as long as they have by being foolish. And to Mythos deities that call the Asian region home, oni are considered fair game to use as fodder for their purposes.

O-bake have had to compete and sometimes battle outright with intruding Mythos races for the limited space on the Japanese islands. Sometimes, humans are unfortunate enough to either witness these exchanges or, even worse, get caught in the middle. The tengu and mi-go races have constant skirmishes for possession of the mineral rich mountainous regions of Japan. And while the kappa and deep one races are possibly closely related and at peace, individual and long held clan conflicts do arise in certain regions.

One of the most complete works on this class of creatures is an unpublished manuscript titled *Supernaturalia Japonica, an Encyclopedia of Japanese Myths, Monsters and Ghosts*, by famous turn-of-the-century writer Lafcadio Hearn. He was well known for his desire to preserve the lore of medieval Japanese culture, which was fading due to industrialization. Hearn also sought to collect the information on the hidden corners of Japan. This work was never published, probably due to the machinations of the very creatures he wrote about, but copies do exist, possibly in the hands of cultists and scholarly institutions unaware of its value. In addition to information of the various types of o-bake-mono, even including some types of yôkai, it also includes imperfect Call and Contact spells for the bold.

KAPPA (kah-pa), Lesser Independent Race

Known euphemistically as "water-tigers," kappa are a vampiric amphibious race possibly distantly related to deep ones. Three feet tall at maximum, they weigh from 20 to 30 pounds; exceptional specimens reach 50 pounds. With the facial features of a lion, and the large sharp beak of a bird, they can look quite ferocious despite their diminutive size. Their clammy, slimy skin is a sickly green hue at rest, but, like a cuttlefish, they instinctively alter their skin color to match the ambient surroundings. Kappa have thick fatty deposits under the skin allowing them to survive extreme cold with ease; as a result, most kappa prefer habitats with temperatures around 45 degrees Fahrenheit. (There are regional genetic adaptations in the warmer climes of southern Japan; Kappa residing there appear as "skin and bones" due to less insulating fatty subcutaneous tissue.) On their back is a thick protective tortoise-like shell. Hands and feet are webbed to enable them to quickly swim after prey. Cunning, they prefer to overwhelm large or powerful prey in great numbers.

Kappa young are fully functioning and grow to adult size in less than a season. These young are able to walk and speak the kappa tongue at birth, presumably retaining racial memories from their parents.

Most kappa live in underwater kingdoms just off the coasts of the Japanese islands, though some have been known to wander inland via freshwater streams. There are also unreliable accounts of underground kappa kingdoms which abduct and consume humans who stray too close. Due to the warm waters and rich underwater resources around

Optional Rule: contact spells

When a foreign or uninformed cultist uses a Contact spell in Japan, the likelihood (60%) is that the native o-bake will answer the call over the expected Mythos creature. For example, Contact Deep One yields a kappa, Contact Mi-Go finds a tengu answering, and Contact Elder Thing has a tengu arriving. Any attempt to Summon a type of vampiric being on Japanese soil may call a kitsune. Of course, variants to specifically call o-bake are available: Contact Kappa, Contact Kitsune, Contact Tatsu and Contact Tengu. In the case of oni, Summon/Bind spells must be used for this servitor race.

the Sea of Japan, kappa have no reason to stray far from these climes. Deep ones maintain colonies side by side with kappa kingdoms in Asia with little or no conflict.

Kappa occasionally take human captives for slave labor or amusement. From the crazed reports of those few humans who have survived captivity within kappa settlements, it would seem that kappa culture is an alien parody of human civilization. However, no one can verify for certain that such examples aren't the kappas' bizarre and elaborate sense of humor, done only for the benefit of driving human captives insane. Understanding kappa motivations is a hopeless endeavor, for what a human might consider humorous or innocuous, a kappa can consider deadly offense.

Kappa speak their own native tongue with the most adventurous of kappa also able to speak Japanese but in a squeaky, halting manner. Spoken Kappanese consists of disconcerting combinations of croaks and bird-like screams. Recovered remnants of the written kappa language show it to be composed of numerous spiraling symbols, looking much like an inebriated person trying to draw pictures of broken watch springs. Those few recovered and deciphered samples of the written Kappanese appear to be similar to passages from the *R'lyeh Text* and *Zanthu Tablets* in content.

Kappa religion involves the worship of local wata-tsumi taisi and the kami Sui-jin. They have also been known to serve as messengers for Cthulhu and the star spawn of Cthulhu. Some kappa kingdoms also pay homage to the Great Old One Yig.

Kappa are clever creatures who will never attack larger prey unless they already have an edge to compensate for their size disadvantage. They will readily flee a scene if they lose the advantage. They have been known to lure victims into various pre-made traps where they can then call their brethren to outnumber an opponent, or to feast on the incapacitated human at their leisure.

Kappa are fierce guardians of the underwater ruins scattered throughout Okinawa. Kappa artifacts indicate worship of Yig and Gol-Goroth, but a special affinity for the Great Old One Mappo no Ryûjin. The origins of the kappa are unclear but conjecture is they may be result of a failed hybrid experiment by Mu'ian sorcerers, an alien race which once dwelled in the depths of the Mystic Lake of Hali, or a degenerate offshoot of the serpent people. Indications are they may have once been a servitor race.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Kappa's Crown: Kappa retain their unnatural speed and strength on land by keeping moisture in an oval-shaped depression nestled upon the crown ringed with matted, stringy black hair. As a kappa ages, this saucer depression hardens, making them less vulnerable to misfortune and able to endure dry spells longer. If circumstance causes a kappa to spill this fluid, thus losing connection with the sea, a kappa will dehydrate, temporarily losing most of its physical prowess. (Loss of moisture reduces all characteristic ratings by 75%.)

Kappa, though predatory to humans, will go to extraordinary lengths begging for mercy if they are caught in a compromising position. Often, they will offer to become the willing servant of the human who caused them to spill the vital fluid from their crown, or for that matter, any who aid them at this time of weakness.

Tales abound of deeds performed by kappa so caught, and kappa are honor-bound once they give their word, but the greedy should beware that they follow their own alien code of ethics. Old Japanese myths hold that a kappa will willingly repay their savior with one service to clear the debt. Not surprisingly, some foolish people have purposely tried to get kappa indisposed in order to gain riches, much like the old tales of leprechauns and their pots of gold in Ireland, a dangerous gamble at best. Wily kappa honor the letter of the request, but never the spirit. Kappa are excellent in exacting vengeance for perceived slights, especially upon those to whom they owe servitude.

Kappa's Breath: All kappa can bestow Kappa's Breath, the ability to breathe underwater, but this must be renewed once every 12 hours or the recipient will drown. Long term use of this gift turns the recipient into a kappa. There is also a point where a human receiving this spell is no longer able to breathe air due to the development of gills, explaining perhaps why so few people return from the captivity of underwater kappa kingdoms.

Feeding: Unlike deep ones, kappa view humankind as a food source and potential entertainment, to be humiliated before being devoured. Kappa attack swimmers, fishermen, and people near shore with amazing agility and surprising strength for their tiny size. Once a kappa seizes a person, it drags the victim underwater and holds on until the victim drowns. It then siphons out all of a victim's blood through their entrails, preferably the sphincter orifice. The dead victim will wash ashore appearing to merely be the result of an unfortunate drowning. This feeding gives the kappa 1D6 temporary points to STR, CON and DEX for a period of 24 hours. (This drains 1 CON per round until reaching 0 CON, which kills the victim. If the victim can get free before the kappa completes its feeding, the person regains CON at a normal rate with bed rest. If the victim dies there is a 20% chance that the victim will arise as some form of undead. Most often this is a kitsune-bi, nin-ba-zoshi, or hitodama, but yûrei or gaki are also possible in rare cases.)

For the purpose of casting Contact Kappa, kappa names are always three letters variants: Lap, Tok, Bag, Dig, Qax, etc.

KAPPA

KAPPA, Amphibious Vampires

*class:**	*rolls*	*averages*
STR	4D6	14
CON	3D6	10–11
SIZ	1D3+1	3
INT	3D6	10–11
POW	3D6	10–11
DEX	3D6x6	16–17
Move 10/16 Swimming		HP 7

** A kappa with an empty crown has only 25% of all characteristic ratings.*

Weapons: Bite 40%, damage 1D6+db

Armor: 1 point of clammy skin: a kappa's shell affords a 3 point bonus from the rear.

Spells: Specimens of POW 12 or greater usually know 1D4 spells related to sea, weather, and Kappa's Breath.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a kappa.

KITSUNE (KEET-SUE-NAY), Lesser Independent Race

The *hu-ching* migrated like gypsies over the centuries from China, then Korea, and eventually to Japan, where they were called *ki-tsu-ne*, fox-spirits. Kitsune are alien elemental spirits which haunted their native planet, long devoid of life due to predation by dholes. When the great dimensional Gates were opened during the destruction of Mu, the kitsune, drawn by the teeming lifeforce on Earth, slipped through as well. They quickly adapted to the living matrix of the earth by manifesting as animal-like beings with close affinity to the elemental energies of their new planet.

Though highly disruptive to earthly life force, kitsune can instantly manifest in physical reality in their true form. Reckless kitsune who use this method often become blights on their surroundings, draining life essence from neighboring buildings, kami, and humans alike in a wide swath in order to sustain their unnatural presence.

A great deal of Japanese mythic lore has sprung up around this race of shape-changing animals. It is believed that when it rains on a perfectly sunny day that a fox wedding, *kitsune no yomeiri*, is taking place with an entire retinue of kitsune dressed in Edo Period samurai garb, the bride in a Shinto kimono of the purest white. Those unfortunate humans who spy such a spectacle are hunted down and killed by the wedding party. People know of the kitsune mostly through pranks and retribution. Kitsune are neither good nor evil, but see things from a perspective alien to humanity. Their feeding needs as well as their non-physical natures easily explain why they are always willing to exploit the weaknesses and flaws of others.

Kitsune follow their own code of ethics, though they often wear human customs like clothes to fit in unnoticed. Mercurial, they befriend as many as they antagonize, but always stay true to their core personality. If they judge a person as not being correct in his actions they can be evil, malevolent and destructive. If, however, they consider a person to be good, they can be gentle, helpful and polite in line with the Taoist Yin and Yang aspect of all life. Understanding the reasoning of these creatures is problematic, so it is best to steer clear of them.

Kitsune rarely, if ever, reveal their true names to humans. In essence, kitsune are spirits and as such are vulnerable to the manipulations of kotodama masters, adept at using the secret power of names. Knowledge of a kitsune's true name allows it to be bound to servitude, or banished. For this reason, kitsune assume a name humorously appropriate to the situation.

Kitsune, being a special type of spirit, are ageless but not immortal, and never age more than nine hundred years. Well before then, they die and return to the spirit world never to return, or reincarnate into different beings within the Six Realms. As a kitsune ages, the energy required to maintain existence on Earth increases as the kitsune's personal energy conduit between the homeland and physical reality atrophies. Though rare, there are extremely old kitsune close to nine hundred years, but they can only maintain their presence in physical reality for short times, for the number of magic points needed to maintain this presence is high.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Shape Changing: By putting a magic leaf on their heads kitsune are able to take on human guise. The "magic leaf" so often talked about in lore is in fact just a focal point for young kitsune who aren't so adept at shape changing yet.

Generally speaking, kitsune have three main forms: a typical Japanese fox, a half humanoid fox-headed form, and the guise of an extremely alluring human. As foxes, they have no more strength or abilities than a normal animal of the species might have with the exception of human cunning and intelligence. Their man-fox form is generally physically stronger than most humans, though very beautiful to behold.

Kitsune Castes and Ranking

Kitsune culture is a rough duplicate of the Japanese feudal caste system of pre-modern Japan, which was based on feudal allegiances, and the honor code of the Bushidō warrior ethic. In line with oriental mysticism, the kitsune are aligned into 13 feudal *nji* or clans, showing an affinity for each of the 13 low Taoist elements. The homeland of the kitsune is located within the Dreamlands and an occasional rift will open into the waking world when a great gathering of kitsune is occurring such as a kitsune wedding or a matsuri festival. Celestial kitsune, also called *nyoko* [nee-yoh-ko], are considered the highest ranked of the *nji*.

The number of tails a kitsune-spirit bears evidences ranking and strength among kitsune. Usually, a kitsune naturally gains one tail every hundred years and additionally gains silver fur due to great age sometime after the seventh tail grows. Nine-tails, called *kyuko*, are considered the most powerful and dangerous of the kitsune, no doubt from the worldly experience that great age affords. With a world-view alien to humanity, tenko are either very malign or extremely neutral to human affairs. Generally speaking, the power levels of kitsune are exponential based on tail-rank. An angry nine-tailed kitsune can be a true terror to behold, overthrowing people and structures alike in its wrath.

Kitsune are also well known by the Japanese as messengers for the kami. Two statues always flank the front gate of Shinto shrines dedicated to Inari, the kami deity of merchants and rice harvesting. These shrine guardians, called *komaku* [koo-yah-koh], are of the white celestial kitsune clan, one male and one female that are able to manifest through the shrine statues when the need arises. Unlike the chaotic discord causing *aka kitsune* [ah-kah-kee-tsuu-nay] foxes, Shrine guardians are said to police wayward kitsune and take their duties very seriously.

Inari shrines have "one thousand" red torii archways arranged into a long tunnel from the shrine-compound entrance to the main shrine. On proper nights, these tunnels act as Gateways to the kitsune homeland in the Dreamlands. Kitsune can be summoned to these locations for the purpose of relaying messages to the gods by placing fried tofu on the ground, spending 2 magic points and chanting a special Shinto prayer. Be warned that a no-gitsune may manifest just as readily as a byakko and a person should be prepared to deal with the arrival of these unpredictable and dangerous entities in an encounter which could end badly for the summoner.

Kitsune illusions affect all five sensations and seem real to the casual observer. Japanese tales tell of kitsune who wed and lived with humans for decades in human guise and even bore children, so convincing were the illusions weaved by the kitsune. They are able to take on any human guise, but astute humans can see through this illusion: a kitsune's true alien form is revealed by the shadow it casts. Also, no matter what shape they hold, they never lose their tails and must take pains to hide it in their disguise. Kitsune know these problems of shape shifting so are very careful to conceal these flaws. Those people of a religious nature, such as Shinto priests, yamabushi, miko, and itako do not see kitsune illusions but their true alien form. These holy people can unsettle a kitsune, causing it to lose concentration and disrupt its illusionary tricks.

Though shapeshifters, their shadow will always betray their old native form, a five-foot-tall stalk with 20 or so tentacles protruding all over in strange angles, mostly flattened close as tangled hair to the central tube-like body. Each tentacle is topped with a small orb, presumably a sense organ. The largest is its "tail," which cannot be fully concealed. Note that a kitsune's default shape is the man-fox form on Earth, even without cost or concentration, but they can never hide the shadow of what they once were. Witnesses of its true shape lose 1/1D8 SAN.

(Investigators suspecting kitsune trickery may make an Idea roll to detect telltale signs. Kitsune are the cleverest of the Japanese bakemono and usually conceal any flaw in their disguise, staying in well-lit areas to avoid shadows or wearing a jacket to conceal their tail.)

***Direct* Physical Manifestation:** A kitsune can appear as a physical creature in the Waking World. It does not possess a mortal body but walks the earth in its true form. This costs 1 magic point per round.

Possession: Most often, kitsune manifest by possession of a human host. The points of entry into the potential host are the fingernails and chest. Victims of possession are said to suffer from *kitsune-tsuki*, or fox-lunacy. Roll the victim's POW versus the kitsune's POW. If the intended host is asleep, the fox can invade the target's dreams and weaken the human's will. This attack leads to sleepless nights or nightmares. Each failed roll, the victim also loses 2D6 magic points and 1 point of Sanity. Magic points cannot be regained until the kitsune is killed, stops its attack, or completes possession. If the kitsune wins and drains the victim to 0 magic points, it assumes control of the target's mind and body until the next sunrise or sunset where the kitsune goes dormant for that half of the day. Once successful, the will of the host is broken and the kitsune gains full control the body. The conscious essence of the host goes into a coma-like state, so kitsune do not have access to any memories or abilities of the host. Kitsune possession is not usually a long-term affair but when it is, it often costs the victim years or decades of lost time with only amnesia in return. In ages past, kitsune possession was easily broken by the blessings of a Buddhist priest, or exorcism by a Yamabushi mountain ascetic. Nowadays, fox-spirits are not widely believed in except by the oldest living generation, so a possession by a cunning kitsune goes unnoticed by friends and family. Only the most powerful of kitsune (POW 50+) can change shape while in possession of a human host. Possession costs 1 magic point per day.

Physical Incarnation: Another form of possession kitsune perform is the permanent possession of a fox cub. The kitsune's lifeforce easily dominates the weak and unformed fox-cub spirit. The kitsune then blends its dominant lifeforce with the fox cub's and the two become one. So powerful is the kitsune that only the fox cub's basic instinctual drives survive the merging. This guarantees instant possession, a permanent physical vehicle in the mortal realm and the ability to transform into all three forms. The drawback of this method is that the kitsune is locked within the mortal shell for an entire nine hundred-year life span and can be physically killed by any means a normal mortal can. However, it cannot be banished by exorcism or prayers. Another disadvantage is the kitsune must expend greater energy to perform special attacks as it must focus the energy through the burden of a mortal shell. Physical incarnation costs no magic points, but magic point costs for all other kitsune abilities are tripled in this form.

Feeding: Kitsune feed upon life essence and ki. Complete destruction is not always the result of such feedings but the target of a drain is always weakened qualitatively in some way. Older kitsune often totally drain essence to maintain their existence on this plane. As the kitsune feeds, the process is subtle, drawing ki from pure elements of flames, wind, forest, song, or even written knowledge. When feeding, the element being fed upon diminishes in intensity or volume, and if completely drained, it leaves only a pile of ash. On the darker side, kitsune with more jaded tastes feed upon the essence of souls, considered by far the strongest source of ki in the physical plane. To initiate a feeding the kitsune need only touch the target's bare flesh once. No further contact is needed as an energy conduit is formed between the two beings. Unless a person is a willing target, the kitsune player must roll its POW against the desired ability it wishes to drain on the Resistance Table each time it feeds. Seduction is an important skill for kitsune as it makes feeding easier. Lost essence can be large or even unnoticeable. Beings targeted for kitsune feedings become

KITSUNE (MAN-FOX FORM)

withered, sickly, and pale as their life-force fades. One feeding is not sufficient to effect death, but it may occur over prolonged periods.

Old myths say that buckwheat noodles, *soba*, are an effective remedy for kitsune drain. Aggressive kitsune will tell a repeated victim about this remedy in payment for services rendered from the feeding. Kitsune drain 1D4 points of a characteristic per feeding session based on the keeper's discretion. This can be regained with rest as the normal healing rate used for hit points. The consumption of soba seems to double recovery speed from a kitsune inflicted drain. Kitsune feeding from humans can also choose to alternate what characteristic they drain—though they often do have one particular ability they are especially adept at feeding off of (1D6). A kitsune gains 1 magic point per characteristic point drained.

Kitsune-Bi, Fox Fires: A kitsune is able to create lightning or fire by rubbing its tails together. This forms into a natural energy ball and is usable as a weapon against opponents. Fox-spirits can also breathe fire up to five feet. Small kitsune-bi can also be used as a source of illumination or hurled. These attacks are often confused with ghosts of the same name, which is to the kitsune's liking. This kitsune special ability costs the creature 1 magic point per round it is used.

Attacking a Kitsune: Kitsune are not easy creatures to damage or kill. Unless its spirit is completely destroyed, a kitsune will regenerate on the spiritual plane in the Dreamlands homeland until strong enough to re-materialize in the Waking World.

Kitsune who are directly manifested regenerate all hit points automatically each round. A normal weapon becomes useless after being used on a kitsune once; the kitsune becomes immune to damage from that individual weapon thereafter. However, blessed or enchanted weapons do full damage repeatedly, and such damage heals at normal human rates. Depleting a kitsune's hit points will cripple, kill, or banish it back to the spirit world.

Kitsune in possessed bodies can simply leave the host who then suffers the pain and damage originally meant for the fox-spirit. Kitsune who inhabit a physical body are less vulnerable to damage from enchanted or blessed weapons than fully manifested ones. (Only one-half of the enchanted weapon's damage roll affects the possessing kitsune; the other half is suffered by the host.) However, such kitsune body thieves take full damage from mundane weapons along with their unwilling hosts, making them as vulnerable as any mortal being.

KITSUNE, Fox Spirits—Man-Fox/Human Form

char.	*roll:*	*average*
STR*	5D6	17–18
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ*	4D6	14
INT#	4D6	14
POW#	3D6	10–11
DEX	2D6+6	13
Move* 10		HP* 14

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4

** In fox form, STR is one-quarter normal, SIZ is one-half normal (with a corresponding reduction in hit points), and Move is 12.*

#For each 100 years of life add 1D6 to INT and POW.

Weapon: Breathe Fire 40%, damage 1D6

Kitsune-Bi 30%, fire or electrical damage 1D8+2

Armor: 1 point of fur.

Spells: *none.*

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 SAN to see a kitsune's true alien form, or to see one transforming.

TATSU (TAHT-SUE), GREATER INDEPENDENT RACE

Dragons have always been revered by the Japanese as elemental beings with awesome powers over nature. The most frequently encountered tatsu have a natural affinity for the element of water. Izanami and Izanagi, the Japanese progenitor kami who spawned all other kami, created the Japanese island chain. In the process, the pair also created the *wata-tsumi* (wah-taht sue-mē), "lords of the sea." The strength of a wata-tsumi is directly tied to the element of water; the larger the body of water, the more formidable the dragon. They control the rains, are the guardians of pearls, and are believed by humans to be bearers of wealth and good fortune. Another kind of Asian dragon was born from the blood of the fire kami *Kora-okami* and *Kura-mitsuha*. These *kazu-tuchi* (kah-zoo sue-che) cavort in the molten rivers far below the surface and are said to cause earthquakes when they wake from their long slumbers. In addition to these two earthly types of dragons, there also exist *celestial tatsu*, or heavenly dragons, that reside in the Palace of the Green Dragon and invoke thunder in the skies by the movement of their massive rippling bodies.

Japanese dragons are often depicted as having long serpentine forms, which occasionally bear legs. As a carry over from Chinese Taoism, tatsu are said to have exactly 117 scales: 81 scales under the sway of the good fortune of Yang, and 36 under the pull of the bad fortune of Yin. Dragons are seen as the quintessence of Yin and Yang, being both active vehicles of destruction and reactive beings beneficial to humanity. Undisputed rulers of the elements, tatsu are feared greatly by kitsune who are natural parasites of the elements. These great beasts can easily snuff such pests without a second thought, so kitsune consider dragons their deadliest enemy, but dragons hardly give much energy to hunting down kitsune. The legends of the Japanese movie industry's Godzella may have been based on actual sightings of tatsu.

NATURE OF THE BEAST

The tatsu are believed to be native animus manifestations of Eirth herself. Personifications of the very life force of planet, they are the living will of Gaia. This follows from the animistic concept that all life forms existing on Earth are individual units but also cells of a much larger complex collective living entity with primal sentience, Gaia. The tatsu are the white blood cells of Earth's bio-system—its natural defense system. Tatsu are impartial guardians of the earth and are rather indifferent to the infestation of humanity but do attack non-terrestrial invaders.

In the "modern age" of humanity, the effect of human expansion across the face of Earth is much like a virus in that the planet is slowly being choked by pollutants and the abuse of natural resources. Gaia is in serious danger of being weakened beyond her natural ability to repair herself, and so too her "protectors" are weakened. Tatsu slumber, unable to awaken out of their native elements because they cannot survive independently in the low energy state that the life-web of the Earth presently exists in. Widespread mass extinctions of earthly life forms have caused some tatsu to completely fade from existence. The once mighty tatsu are a dying race. When the stars are right, Mappo will begin and the Great Old Ones will again stride the world's continents reaping swaths of destruction, and the helpless tatsu will continue to slumber.

Currently, the most active tatsu are in the Dreamlands. In the Waking World, dragon's lairs are detected by fu sui experts as "dragon paths," called ley lines by druids of the west. The actual essence of the dragons rests in the energy lines that wind the planet and pool in places of power like shrines, temples and holy sites. The UK's Stonchenge is where one powerful and ancient celestial tatsu slumbers merged with the Earth. Many temples in Kyoto also mark sleeping dragons. Confusing, but at the same time telling, is the fact that every human culture contains some variant legend of dragons in its myths.

This can be easily explained that the tatsu were much stronger and more visible in the distant past when Earth was verdant with life and flooded with bio-energy. They were seen most often in the distant past when the earth was healthy and young.

Mythos scholars argue that the "Earth Mother" theory is so much tripe and that it is a greater possibility that tatsu are not in fact terrestrial but the offspring of the Great Old One Yig and the Mother of all Serpents, the Great Dragon of Mappo, with serpent people a later by-product. There is some unclear connection between the serpent people and the tatsu. Perhaps the dragons at some point in the ancient past spawned their smaller brothers. It's certainly possible that kappa are a creation by the wata-tsumi: both have the same elemental affinities. Due to their massive size and abilities, tatsu can often be confused with certain Great Old Ones and other Mythos entities and vice versa. Lloigor sometimes take on forms that mimic true dragons. The Great Old One Yig may well be a superior member of the race of god-like beings, the tatsu.

TATSU

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Breath Element: Tatsu are able to expel great gouts of their respective elemental affinity, breathing material out from their maw. A wata-tsumi drowns a target with a torrent of water, A kazu-tsuchi breathes flame or spits lava, and a celestial dragon shoots bolts of lightning or wind.

Call Thunder/Earthquake/Tsunami: By moving their massive bodies in a snake-like rippling motion, dragons are able to cause natural disturbances.

- Wata-tsumi call forth tsunami with their perturbations of the water.
- Kazu-tsuchi can invoke earthquakes and eruptions.
- Celestial tatsu often cause thunder and typhoons with their aerobatics.

Element Drain: Like kitsune, tatsu feed from the elements they have affinity for. If a dragon can grasp or swallow a victim, it will drain that respective element from the body of the person.

- A wata-tsumi, a water dragon, will drain moisture in the form of 1 CON point per round, visible effects being dehydration of the target.
- A kazu-tsuchi, a fire dragon, will consume flame in the form of 1 STR point per round, resulting in the victim's muscles withering away.
- A celestial tatsu, a being of the heavens, will drain 1 point of INT a round, the end result being a mental vegetable.

Manifest: Most of the time, tatsu exist in a merged state with their element. By manifesting they take on a distinct physical form. Sometimes a slow process, it can make the dragon seem almost ethereal in consistency—a transparent mold of the element from which it manifests. Hapless witnesses sometimes end up questioning their vision.

Regeneration: Dragons are living elemental beings, not wholly physical, and are able to siphon energy, ki, from the element for which they have the greatest affinity. In this way, tatsu can regenerate lost hit points by contact with that element and reform their bodies from it at a rate of five points per round. Magic points likewise regenerate at a rate of one point every ten minutes. Wata-tsumi use bodies of water, kazu-tsuchi frequent volcanoes or fires, and celestial tatsu can regenerate with electricity or POW.

Summon Aid: All dragons are able to summon and consult with Great Old Ones or Outer Gods at considerable sacrifice to their own personal resources. Commonly called upon are beings tatsu feel an affinity for: wata-tsumi contact Cthulhu or Yig, kazu-tsuchi prefer Tulzscha or Cthugha, and celestial tatsu often rely upon either Hastur or Nyarlathotep.

Telepathy: Tatsu are able to communicate with humans by projecting their thoughts as three-dimensional scenes within the mind of the recipient. These can seem as real as actually being at the physical place. Dreams are also a common form of communication. For the human mind, such telepathic images are often cryptic at best, requiring much interpretation by the receiver—so divergent are the thought processes of the long-lived tatsu.

TATSU, Masters of the Elements

	wata-tsumi	*kazu-tsuchi*	*celestial*
*char.**	*rolls*	*rolls*	*rolls*
STR	4D6 x5 (70)	4D6 x5 (70)	4D6 x5 (70)
CON	3D6+40 (50–51)	3D6+50 (60–61)	3D6+30 (40–41)
SIZ	5D6 x5 (85–90)	4D6 x5 (70)	6D6 x5 (105)
INT	5D6 (17–18)	3D6 (10–11)	6D6 (21)
POW	7D6 (24–25)	6D6 (21)	8D6 (28)
DEX	2D6 (7)	3D6 (10–11)	4D6 (14)
HP	68–71	65–66	73

Move 6/20 flying

**Averages for each dragon type are listed in parentheses.*

Av. Damage Bonus:# +9D6/+8D6/+10D6.

 # Ratings for each dragon type are separated by slashes.
Weapons: Breath Element 75%, damage 6D6
Crush 85%, damage 6D6 or 3D6+db
Swallow 65%, damage 3D6+element drain (1 point per round)
Tail Swat 50%, damage 1D6+db

Armor: 5 points scale and muscle. Removal of scales reduces armor to 1 point. Regenerates 5 points per round from elemental regeneration as long as in contact with element. If brought to zero hit points, the tatsu dissipates, unable to reform in the material plane for 1001 years.

Spells: Usually all spells related to its element. Tatsu can bestow such knowledge to the brave at the keeper's discretion.

Sanity Loss: 1D4/1D20 Sanity points to see the fully manifested form of a tatsu.

TENGU (TEN-GOO), GREATER INDEPENDENT RACE

Chinese/Sanskrit: T'ien-Kou/Garuda

Called *t'ien-kou* (celestial dog) in China, the Chinese regarded these foul creatures as bird-like mountain demons who kidnapped and ate children, practiced arson, and delighted in leading priests astray from their vows. While there are kernels of truth to these myths, the value that the tengu place on solitude in their remote mountain nests more than explains their extremely mischievous reputation. Tengu possess the ability to produce illusionary images, most often disguising themselves as normal humans in order to tempt Buddhist priests. Migrating with the Chinese priests they so loved to torment, the t'ien-kou arrived in Japan during the fifth and sixth centuries. A humanoid race with blended crow-like avian features, these secretive beings bear the beak, talons, shiny black wings, and bare feet of an avian but the bipedal shape and hands of humanity.

Tengu of great age grow long wiry beards, their hair and feathers turning snow white. These aged tengu are most often the wise men and leaders of the race and not to be trifled with. Tengu live to an extremely advanced age, sometimes several centuries or more, which can be seen in the telltale wrinkles of an aged tengu's bare feet.

Said in myth to have arrived on comets and meteors, the tengu are an ancient starry race that settled the continent of Asia Minor 50,000 years ago. Tengu are often found in mountainous regions of Asia and have on occasion had disputes with the mi-go over territory. The reasons for their migration to Earth have been long forgotten by living tengu, but all vaguely recall some sad event resulting from arrogance on the part of their race. It is for this reason that tengu despise such attitudes in other beings and often severely punish such behavior in the humans they encounter. For centuries various regional masks depicting tengu likeness have arisen for use in Shinto festivals and Noh plays. Today, most Japanese people believe that tengu are mere myth, hardly suspecting what perches in the mountains far above.

While the tengu do not remember, they once inhabited the same star system as the byakhee. With a culture at its peak of technological mastery, the tengu instigated a war to become undisputed rulers of the star system of Aldebaran. After many millennia, the byakhee began to lose the war wholesale and pleaded to Hastur for aid, who demanded servitude by the entire race in exchange. Angered, the tengu summoned Ghroth to destroy the byakhee. Hastur managed to stop the Outer God but not before Ghroth consumed the original byakhee homeworld and caused the tengu planet to plunge into Aldebaran's sun in a fiery conflagration. Fleeing and scattering in all directions, some tengu arrived on Earth 50,000 years ago. To this day, tengu are a shattered race and sworn enemies of Hastur. Due to the influence of the Emerald Lama, Hastur's avatar, on Buddhism, tengu often act as antagonists to human Buddhist institutions.

On the Japanese archipelago tengu encountered few if any mi-go outposts and so easily colonized the remotest regions of mountainous Japan without opposition. As the t'ien-kou branch of the avian race in China were slowly wiped out by skirmishes with the mi-go over the ensuing centuries, the tengu in Japan thrived.

Highly mystical in nature, these beings possess the ability to produce illusionary images, most often disguising themselves as normal humans in order to tempt Buddhist priests into breaking their vows. With concentration, tengu can weave convincing and complex illusions including the sensations of vision, taste, smell and touch. Some tengu use these abilities to convince naïve priests they have reached the Western Paradise of the Pure Land. Some enjoy encouraging gluttony in a fasting monk who quickly discovers he has been tricked and the sumptuous four course meal he has been eating is actually steaming animal dung.

However, such illusions are not complete, and the intelligent observer can perceive a tengu's true form by the shadow it casts and the absence of sound in the illusion. Tengu illusions can also be shattered by potent magic or a successful bare-handed or bare-footed attack by a powerful martial artist, the magical backlash transforming the tengu temporarily into a wounded mundane blackbird.

("Potent magic" constitutes Mythos magic intended to dispel, disturb or show the illusion for what it is. A tengu illusion cannot be revealed by an incidental side-effect of a Mythos spell meant to do something else. Lesser human magics generally do not shatter tengu illusions. A "powerful martial artist" is one with Martial Arts skill of 50 percentiles or higher.)

Older, experienced tengu are more skilled at this illusionary aspect of the tengu mystic arts. This mystical

TENGU

aptitude is reflected in their hierarchy. Among humans, tengu adopt the guise of elderly men with unusually long human noses rather than their true beaks. These tengu are in charge of the younger crow-like tengu who are unable to fully alter their shape.

The kings of all tengu are called the *sojobo* [sew-jo-bow], and are the eldest and most wizened of the white haired tengu. Sojobo wear only the religious garb of a Yamabushi priest. Living in the same mountains that Yamabushi priests frequent during their pilgrimages, it's no surprise that tengu elders began to adopt the garb of these ascetic mountain priests for disguise. The sojobo is said to have taught the famous shôgun, Yoshitsune Minamoto, martial arts and strategy on Mt. Kurama near Kyoto.

The birdlike features of the tengu can be deceiving, for tengu are not capable of true flight. Rather, they travel from location to location via astral apportation, disappearing in one place and instantly appearing elsewhere. It is perhaps for this reason that they have bare feet, for they never have to physically walk far.

Tengu communicate through the use of telepathy, never moving their mouths to speak. Skilled tengu can also use telepathy to possess or speak directly through other people when the need arises, but such direct mental contact with tengu can be detrimental to the human psyche. On rare occasions, tengu have been known to appear in people's dreams and communicate with them in this way as well.

Like their earthly avian cousins, tengu are born from huge eggs in fiercely guarded tengu nurseries and prefer lofty locales. They often live out their secluded lives in the uppermost reaches of the mountains. Often, they take on the trappings of human Yamabushi priests and walk amongst humanity disguised as mystics who reside in remote mountain monasteries.

Over the millennia, the tengu race has come accept the occasional intrusions of humans and some have even come to appreciate the ethics of the transient Yamabushi priests, adopting their unique outfits and descending into human society to observe. But this is rare and tengu who do so are seen either as great teachers or hopeless fools by their own kind. Most tengu are grim by nature and are as likely to taunt humans or drive them insane with illusions as to aid them.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Weave Illusion: Tengu are able to construct highly convincing illusions by investing magical energy with intent, creating powerful thought-forms. For a witness to realize that it's not real, roll INT on the Resistance Table versus the number of magic points the tengu invested in the illusion. If the witness wins, he detects a flaw in the illusion, such as the tengu's true avian shadow, and can dispel it by expending an equal number of magic points. If the witness loses, he believes the scene is real until the point the tengu drops the illusion. The exception to this rule is if the tengu tells or attempts to trick its victim into doing something that seriously violates the target's ethics, such as a Buddhist monk eating meat or killing someone, in which case the victim is allowed a re-roll on the Resistance Table.

Telepathy: Tengu communicate through telepathy. A tengu can easily initiate communication with willing targets by spending 1 magic point. A tengu's telepathic voice sounds like a distorted version of the recipient's own thoughts. On rare occasions, tengu have been known to appear in people's dreams. For those who wish to resist tengu possession, telepathy, or dream communication, roll their POW vs. half of the tengu's POW on the Resistance Table. Failure indicates forced communication and a loss of 1 Sanity point as the tengu forces its way past the human mind's natural mental defenses.

Astral Apport: The birdlike features of the tengu are deceiving for tengu are not capable of true flight. Tengu travel by disembodying themselves into an energy state, traveling the astral, and reassembling in a new physical location. Tengu are unable to take passengers due to their method of travel. Tengu are extremely agile and very capable of physical locomotion but are not usually inclined to do so for more than short distances considering the advantages of astral apportation. They have also learned how to avoid the Great Old One Hydra who dwells in the astral plane.

Regeneration: Tengu are multi-dimensional beings, not wholly physical, and are able to draw ethereal energy from the astral plane to regenerate lost hit points and magic points. When wounded, a tengu will automatically regenerate 1 hit point per round until healed. Magic points regenerate at a rate of 1 point every ten minutes.

Martial Arts Prowess: As part of their ascetic training, all tengu are highly adept at several martial arts, and would be considered on par with the most legendary of human fighters (85%+). Most prefer the bo-ken staff or the naginata due to their extended reach. Tengu strikes are always considered impales for the purposes of damage because tengu are able to harness their ki, focused spiritual force, in a physical strike, greatly increasing the potency of physical blows. They are also masters of *ryu-jitsu*, the use of body pressure points to immobilize, stun or kill an opponent. Humans often seek out tengu to learn martial skill and strategy; few meet their desired mentors' strict requirements.

TENGU, Mystic Avian Race

*char.**	*crow-tengu rolls*	*white-beard rolls*	*sojobo rolls*
STR	3D6+6 (16–17)	3D6+4 (14–15)	3D6 (10–11)
CON	6D6 (21)	5D6 (17–18)	4D6 (14)
SIZ	3D6 (10–11)	3D6 (10–11)	3D6 (10–11)
INT	4D6 (14)	6D6 (21)	7D6 (24–25)
POW	6D6 (21)	7D6 (24–25)	8D6 (28)
DEX	5D6 (17–18)	4D6 (14)	3D6 (10–11)
HP	16	14–15	12–13

Move 6 walk/50 Astral Apport

**Averages for each tengu type are listed in parentheses.*

Av. Damage Bonus:# +1D6/0–+1D4/+0.

#Ratings for each tengu type are separated by slashes.

Weapon: Bo-ken Staff 47%, damage 1D6+db

Beak 35%, damage 1D4

Armor: Regenerates 1 point per round from astral regeneration unless somehow blocked. Normal weapons do no damage, but enchanted weapons and spells have full effect. The only exception is the bare-fisted or bare-footed attack of a skilled martial artist (Martial Arts skill must be 50% or higher in ability).

Spells: Tengu with POW 14 or greater usually know 1 spell per point of POW above 13.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a tengu.

Asura Realm: Revenge & Hate

Yôkai, Children of Azathoth

Yôkai (yoh-kye), meaning "bewitching apparition," is a general term referring to a wide variety of creatures that in the West would be called ghouls, goblins, and other monsters. Without exception, yôkai are bizarre in appearance, and often quite frightening to behold. Possibly due to a weaker veil between dimensions, yôkai materialize most often in the hours around dawn and dusk. The forms and abilities of this class of Japanese creatures are wildly divergent, and so it might be said that the term yôkai serves best as a catchall term for the strange.

Yôkai are manifestations of chaos incarnated. Whenever rends or rips in the fabric of space-time occur, tendrils of pure seething chaos seep through from Azathoth's court. Chaos finds purchase on Earth, but cut off from its source, the local paradigm of the beliefs of beings inhabiting the region instantly begins shaping and molding these wild energies. The result is what Japanese call yôkai; in the West they may carry names such as vampires and werewolves. Yôkai are common in Japan because the archipelago rests on a major nexus of an interlacing network of dragon lines (ley lines) which straddles the planet.

Yôkai thrive on supernatural energies. Flaps of yôkai sightings occur where preternatural forces have been unleashed. No energy is ever lost, even supernatural power—yôkai are given life from free ethereal and ki forces (POW/magic points) and sculpted by thousands of years of cultural imprints in the surrounding land itself—all without need of intervention by any sentient being.

When a Great Old One awakens and uses its copious amounts of magical power in the vicinity of Japan, any spillover energies will instantly spawn yôkai. Yôkai will bubble up out of nothingness like frothing chaos and immediately set out to share their birthing pains with any victims they run across.

One other common spawning ground for yôkai is in the vicinity of nexuses of power, called dragon lines by Feng Shui practitioners, or ley lines in the West. Whether intentional or not, many old sacred sites in Japan, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, are situated on such fonts of stored ki energy.

Yôkai come in all power levels. Some are no physical threat to even the weakest investigators; other yôkai are able to break human bones like balsa wood. Despite the omnipresent physical threat, the underlying cause of the formation of any yôkai is what should concern an investigator most: yôkai are often a symptom of a much greater threat looming around the corner.

Optional Rule: Monstrous Animals

A quick and dirty way to create the giant squids and lizards that repeatedly trash Tokyo in the movies.

Multiply a normal animal's STR, CON, and SIZ by anything from x2 to x100 to generate a monstrous variant. Explanations for these behemoths can be natural radiation, "boon" magic points, even industrial fertilizer spills. (See the Giants entry on page 258.)

Yôkai represent a wild card for keepers to introduce in the Japanese setting. Despite the standardized entries, no two yôkai are alike, even if of the same type. This is mainly due to factors involved during the formation of the yôkai, but basically it's to emphasize that yôkai are chaos incarnate. A keeper should feel free to adjust attributes to keep things especially lively when using yôkai.

Yôkai confrontations are encounters with the weird in Japan and are usually survivable by investigators. That doesn't mean upon discovering it's a "mere yôkai" that investigators should let down their guard; some yôkai are unpredictable and grotesque enough to throw investigators off the trail of real threats to humanity and make them just run for their lives.

Destroying yôkai

Physical destruction of a yôkai, that is bringing it to zero hit points, will only disperse the monster for a length of time before it reforms on the spot of its original genesis. A more permanent method is bringing a yôkai manifestation to zero POW, whereupon it is dispelled forever.

The modern Mythos work *Project Yûrei White Paper* (*Yûrei Keikaku Hakusho* in Japanese), contains one of the few spells that purposely invoke yôkai. The reasons for this are quite clear when you look at the mission statement of Project Yûrei: to *tap into* the chaotic energy that creates yôkai and use it as a non-polluting energy source of the future. What the researchers on this project are unaware of is that the spell merely taps into their own magic points, or the ambient magic points in the area.

Constructing a Yôkai

There is an incredible variance of forms in which a yôkai can manifest. Provided here is a quick construction guide for the abilities, powers, and behaviors of a basic yôkai. Yôkai are in essence a disruption of the natural flow of ki when the balance of Yin and Yang is out of kilter, and darker Yin energies prevail. Any scene of intense emotion or magic use is fair game for yôkai manifestation. For this reason, yôkai should be handcrafted by the keeper as they make excellent tools within a scenario to propel the plot, present clues, and throw a curve at jaded investigators. Descriptions of well-known historical and mythical types of yôkai follow this construction guide. The entries are brief, listing only powers and abilities that are exceptions to the general creation guidelines. The rest of the statistics are derived from the POW score. (See explanation below.)

Yôkai Template

YOKAI, Chaos Incarnate

class	*lesser*	*greater*	*unique*
POW*	1D6	6D10	3D100
Re-Form†	1D100	4D10	1D6

**Multiply POW x3 and distribute points as the keeper sees fit to these stats: STR, CON, DEX, SIZ, INT, and Move. HP is derived as usual from CON x SIZ.*

†Number of days before the yôkai materializes after physical destruction.

Weapon: As appropriate to yôkai, often a natural attack.

Armor: As appropriate to yôkai, usually armor is the material the yôkai is made of.

Spells: Base assign for unique yôkai that are also sorcerers, such as the yama-hime forms and akuma forms.

Sanity Loss: Max. loss is never higher than POW, usually about half that value.

THE ELEVEN STEP YÔKAI PROGRAM

One: Energy Released. Determine the energy released in the spawning area by rounding up all the magic points used on a scene. It doesn't have to be precise, just guess if in a rush. (Alternatively roll 4D6 for a minor psychic/magic disturbance, 6D10 for a memorable one, or 3D100 for a major event.) Of course, this can also be arbitrary, based on an actual encounter already experienced in a scenario, or one that has taken place "off-stage" to the investigators. The latter occurrence makes for a good story hook, leading the investigators back to the scene where the yôkai came from. ***Example:*** *an old battle occurred here; 10 magic points were used in the disturbance.*

Two: Emotion & Location. The keeper determines if a powerful emotion was also experienced or had been experienced on that site previously. Consider the environment of the location as this affects the type of yôkai which manifests: Is it a barren field? A snow-covered mountain? An abandoned car lot? A beach? *Example: on this spot, a battle occurred where a ninja killed a samurai. This is an old enchanted battleground.*

Three: Physical Materials. What materials are on hand for the yôkai to mimic? Are there old umbrellas about? A mangy dog? A statue of an oni? ***Example:*** *the samurai felt helpless as his sword broke and still rusts in the soil here today. His sword, a katana, was the focus of his life. So, we'll make a yôkai katana manifest here.*

Four: POW. These three factors decide the type of yôkai that is born. Take the rolled or counted magic points and then use these as the POW of your yôkai. ***Example:*** *our katana-bake Has a POW of 10. makes people feel helpless, and haunts battlegrounds.*

Five: POW x3=Stats. Take this POW value, multiply by 3 and use the points for remaining statistics. All abilities of the yôkai are based upon the random energy that spawned it. The POW may seem high but this is what powers a manifestation of a yôkai. ***Example:*** *POW 10 x3= 30 points to distribute to the rest of the stats: STR 6, CON 3, INT 2, SIZ 1, DEX 12, Move 6, HP 2. (Hit points are derived by averaging CON and SIZ score, as usual.) The damage bonus = –1D6 but ignore, due to magical fudge-factors.*

Six: Swarms & Groups. Misery loves company. Keepers can create a small swarm of the same type of yôkai. Just divide the POW among them. ***Example:*** *there really isn't enough magical energy to animate more than one good yôkai, so we have just the katana-bake. But if you wanted to make, say, five haunted throwing stars, divide the 10 points of POW by 5 and then you have five shuriken-bake with 2 POW each.*

Seven: Pick a Yôkai Category. Yôkai can be classified into general categories. Here are a few general classes of yôkai: *akuma* (ah-coo-ma)—fiends/devils; *onna* (oh-nah)—female forms; monstrous animals and animated objects. ***Example:*** *Our katana-bake would fall into the class of animated objects since the katana was never a living thing.*

Eight: Craft a Unique Ability. Based upon all your information, decide upon a power or special ability that the yôkai is capable of. By nature, yôkai are the impossible made real, so one fantastic element to the creature makes it all the more bizarre. Often, the scare factor of a yôkai is the mundane made surreal. ***Example:*** *For mobility, our katana-bake can fly through the air as if an invisible samurai was hefting it. It also has a pair of glowing red eyes on the hilt.*

Nine: Special Powers Cost 1 POW. If you want, you can give a yôkai a nasty special attack form or ability, but this drains 1 POW from the monster with each use and thus can render a yôkai inert if used too much. ***Example:*** *For the first power, it can spend 1 permanent POW and perform an impale if it chooses. In ages past, samurai believed that the souls of those slain came to reside within the katana. So as a second power, and to make our katana-bake especially deadly to investigators, you could give it a soul-stealing ability that it uses to fuel its dwindling POW. But in the sake of fairness, we can say that it must first impale a target, its first power, to try to use this second ability. And the chance is based on its current POW times ten, so at 1 POW (1x10=10%) it's a pretty slim chance.*

Ten: Fill out the Stats. Now with a completed yôkai, you probably already have a basic back-story for your creation. At this point, it's a good time to fill out any details that weren't decided earlier. Armor, spells, and Sanity loss should be pretty straightforward to decide based on your description of your monster. Sanity loss should really never be greater than the POW rating however. ***Example:*** *The katana-bake has 3 points of armor due to its metallic composition, no spells, and a Sanity Loss of 0/1D2 points to see the katana swirling around in the air slashing at opponents.*

Eleven: Innate Weakness. Give the yôkai a weakness or way to dispel it with the proper knowledge. Finding the original physical artifact to destroy or bless it, knowing who died on a site or what event occurred where the yôkai was spawned will hint toward some method of freeing the trapped energy of the yôkai back into the natural flow of ki. Uncovering such facts can also be good leads into the main scenario. ***Example:*** *Our katana-bake seeks to re-enact that feeling of helplessness in others its long ago samurai master felt. Perhaps someone facing it with no fear in his or her heart despite a seemingly hopeless situation will dispel it. Or maybe it'll just impale them and steal their soul.*

If the yôkai in the example is banished, the sword, itself an animated creation of "magic," dissolves away into nothingness to re-form when the yôkai replenishes its POW. Normal armor and hit point values for the sword don't apply as the sword isn't real in a mundane sense but a doppelganger of the actual object which still sits in state somewhere on site. In other words, the yôkai is a hostile entity in the *form* of a sword, not an actual sword.

Classes of Yôkai

These general classifications are only to aid the keeper. If unsure what yôkai class to choose when creating a unique, try picking a class loosely related to the history of a place.

Akuma: Fiends/Devils

These yôkai often form where violence or depravity once occurred: old battlegrounds, murder scenes, torture chambers, labor camps, or tragic deaths. They are considered fiends by common people because of their mean spirited or downright deadly behavior towards humans.

DORO-TA-BOH (dough-row-ta-bow)

English Equivalent: Muddy field fiend

Description: This monster hides burrowed in muddy rice fields. It only attacks after the rice has been harvested or the field is left fallow. Its appearance is ghastly: an emaciated hairless man with three fingers on each hand and one eye completely missing. On the face is a wolf's nose and it has the tongue of a snake. When it can grab victims, it tries to suffocate them by pressing their faces in the mud.

Superstitions: Farmers believe that this is the spirit of someone who died of starvation and that now haunts rice fields, a source of comfort.

POW 05 HP 03

Weapon: Claws 30%, damage 1D4

Suffocate 40%, damage 1D4 per round

Armor: none.

Skills: Hide 75%.

Habitat: Rice Fields.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D3 Sanity points to see a muddy field fiend.

IWAMI-NO-USHI-ONI (e-wa-me noh-ew-she oh-knee)

English Equivalent: Sea rock demon.

Description: The form this yôkai takes is a monstrous cross between a red bloated spider and a rocky crab. It bears an oni face with horns like a bull. The size of a man, its powerful legs can readily impale or crush any intruder on its domain.

Superstitions: Fishermen believe that these creatures are the spirits of children who were committed to the sea by mothers unwilling to care for them.

POW 15 HP 10

Weapon: Front legs 40%, 2 attacks per round, damage 1D8
Bite 40%, damage 1D4

Armor: 4 points of bony chitin.

Skills: Scuttle 30%, Stalk 30%.

Habitat: Beaches, shallow waters.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a sea rock demon.

KAWA-AKA-GO (kah-wah ah-ka go)

English Equivalent: River baby.

Description: A river baby can first be heard in the distance as a wailing, helpless baby. Those who run to its aid see what appears to be a child in distress, waving its arms and thrashing in the water, with only its head above water to cry for help. Below the water waits a mass of tentacles, which pulls the would-be rescuer underwater and drowns him.

Superstitions: People think that these yôkai are the spirits of babies abandoned to the river.

POW 04 HP 02

Weapon: *Tentacles 30%, damage 1D2
Hold 65%, damage 1D2 points per round.
**Three tentacles can attack per round.*

Armor: none.

Skills: Cry Pitifully 80%.

Habitat: Rivers.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a river baby's full form.

UMI-BOHZU (ew-me bow-zoo)

English Equivalent: Sea priest.

Description: Frightening because of sheer monstrous size, these yôkai haunt the seafaring lanes. They appear as massive hovering black globes, larger than a ship, that instantly rise out of the sea. Their only other features are perfectly round accusing eyes and the stench of rotten meat.

Superstitions: They are believed to be the spirits of sailors who have died at sea without proper burial. To get past a sea priest safely, no one aboard a ship must look at it or speak. Otherwise, the yôkai will capsize the boat and drown the crew by crushing them under its massive body.

POW 20 HP 20

Weapon: Crush 40%, damage 2D10.

Armor: none.

Skills: Move Silently 30%.

Habitat: Seafaring lanes.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see an umi-bohzu.

Onna: Female Forms

This type of yôkai arises mostly in urban settings. Heartbreak or unrequited love is a key factor in forming these female monsters. Their behavior can be puzzling at times, as they will let a victim go if they "touch" their heart. They are the most intelligent of the yôkai and may well be true incarnated spirits. Free willed, onna yôkai are also the most likely to become servitors to Mythos beings.

ISO ONNA (e-soh oh-na)

English Equivalent: Beach shore maiden.

Description: Beautiful to behold from a distance, iso onna appear as Western mythological mermaids. Upon closer inspection they are terrifying: their faces are fanged parodies of a woman's framed by long stringy green hair and milky yellow eyes. Their hands end in bony talons, and long scaled serpent bodies make iso onna quite frightening indeed.

Superstitions: Fishermen say that iso onna emerge from old unwanted children's dolls being cast into the sea. Old tales say that those who feast upon the flesh of an iso onna gain immortality. The truth is that only 10% gain this gift, 20% transform into iso onna with legs, and the rest die horribly as their organs liquefy in a matter of minutes after eating the flesh.

POW 16 HP 15

Weapon: Claw 40%, damage 1D4
Bite 30%, damage 1D6
Tail Slap 30%, damage 1D8

Armor: 2 points of scales.

Skills: Illusion 50%, Surprise 50%.

Habitat: Rough shoals and any shallow ocean.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see an iso onna.

ISO ONNA

Rokuro-Kubi (row-koo-row-koo-bee)

English Equivalent: Long necked fiend.

Description: Most often encountered in the form of a woman, male rokuro-kubi are not unheard of. Most of the time, they look like normal humans, but when rokuro-kubi attack the living they can extend their necks in a flexible snakelike fashion up to 20 feet. (An impale result on the neck can sever it while the creature is attacking.) During the day a rokuro-kubi appears a corpse, but destroying the body has no effect; it is only an apparition. Only the head is real and it must be chopped off and returned to the original grave of the monster. Rokuro-kubi can also weave mild illusions, such as comforting surroundings, at a cost of 1 magic point per scene.

Superstitions: Perhaps one of the most widely known yôkai, these monsters are believed to form when a person is beheaded and the head is not buried with the remains. Beheading was a common style of execution by samurai in ages past. The only way to permanently dissipate these yôkai is to find the remains, bury the head, and have an ordained Buddhist priest perform burial rites.

POW 12 HP 10

Weapon: Bite 15%, damage 1D2.
Constrict 45%, damage 1D4 per round*
**Note that the neck is so long that it can trap multiple limbs, or heads of one or more opponents at the same time.*

Armor: none.

Skills: Conceal Nature 70%.

Habitat: Anywhere, but prefer abandoned structures.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see a rokuro-kubi.

ROKURO-KUBI

YUKI ONNA (you-key oh-na), Snow Woman

English Equivalent: Snow woman.

Description: Normally, yuki onna are only encountered by stranded and isolated travelers in cold climes, as they prefer to attack those who seem already doomed. A yuki onna appears to be a beautiful maiden of bone white skin and ice blue hair dressed in a white kimono. She wanders the snow-covered countryside in search of companionship. She hungers uncontrollably for the warmth of humans, but doesn't intentionally kill them.

YUKI ONNA

Superstitions: Northern Japanese believe that this monster is created when a woman's love has been rejected and she takes her life by exposure to the elements.

POW 09 HP 06

Weapon: Embrace 40%, damage 1D4 freezing per round*
Kiss 70%, damage paralysis for 1D6 rounds
**Each hit point of warmth she steals she regains a hit point to herself.*

Armor: none.

Skills: Blend with scenery 65%.

Habitat: Found only in places where snow has fallen, commonly sighted in Hokkaido and Northern Japan.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a yuki onna.

Monstrous Animals

Such yôkai manifest in any natural setting: forests, rivers, or mountains. Usually, they are the result of a cruelly treated animal or a careless abuse of nature. (For a detailed example, see the Gazira entry on page 258.)

BAKE-NEKO (bah-kay nay-co)

English Equivalent: Monstrous cat.

Description: A bake-neko appears to be a frail old woman in need of help, but upon coming to her aid, she transforms into a 6 foot high terror of claws and fangs that tries to eat the would-be good Samaritan.

Superstitions: Not much is known about this yôkai as not many people live to tell about encounters with it. Some believe that they sometimes also disguise themselves as normal cats.

POW 08 HP 06

Weapon: Claw 65%, damage 1D6, two claws per round
Bite 45%, damage 1D4

Armor: 2 points of fur.

Skills: Look Helpless 70%.

Habitat: Anywhere secluded.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a transformed bake-neko.

OH-GUMO (oh-gew-mow)

English Equivalent: Monstrous spider.

Description: Possibly related to the Leng spiders, these large creatures like to feast on human fluids to the exclusion of other food sources. They often reach double the size of the average human.

Superstitions: Oh-gumo are said to favor places that have been defiled by pollution, be it spiritual or physical. Some sorcerers gather oh-gumo webs to craft enchanted silk cloth.

POW 06 HP 04

Weapon: Bite 35%, damage 1D2+STR 8 paralytic poison
Web toss 30%, damage STR 8 entangle*
**Roll target's STR vs. STR 8 on Resistance Table to break the webs.*

Armor: 1 point of chitin.

Skills: Build Web 30%.

Habitat: Polluted places.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D2 Sanity points to see a monstrous spider.

Animated Objects

These are perhaps the most bizarre of yôkai as they imitate seemingly mundane items that have taken on a life of their own. Common superstition holds that everyday utensils must be destroyed after 101 years of age or they will naturally become self-willed after such long use.

Bake-furu-geta (bah-kay-foo-roo-geh-tah)

English Equivalent: Haunted second-hand items.

Description: More a catchall than anything, this entry is for any item you might think of that would acquire a life of its own, including innocuous items such as iron pokers, rakes, or shovels animating and assaulting unsuspecting investigators. The requirements for such items are that they have been abandoned or have become antiques.

Superstitions: Think up something that would fit in with your item.

POW 1D10 HP 1D10

Weapon: Recommended at least one attack: Bite 30%, damage 1D4/ Claw 20%, damage 1D4.

Armor: keeper's option, but recommend around 1D4 max.

Skills: As appropriate.

Habitat: Keeper's choice.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points max. to see a bake-furu-geta.

ITA-ONI (e-taht oh-knee)

English Equivalent: Board fiend.

Description: A big surprise when encountered, the ita-oni is a yôkai that appears to be a plank of wood which flies through the air to assault passers-by. On each end of the board are fang-like teeth, which resemble old rusty nails. This yôkai sits on an old building, blending with the background until it strikes. Perhaps most frightening is when they are encountered, it is in groups that swoop down in packs on their victims.

Superstitions: Ita-oni form when a building is left unmaintained for too long and begins to rot, a common occurrence in the countryside.

POW 1 HP 1

Weapon: Bite 20%, damage 1*
**These yôkai often attack in packs of 1D10.*

Armor: 2 points of wood.

Skills: Fly 40%; Hide in Environment 65%.

Habitat: Old buildings.

Sanity Loss: 0/1 Sanity points to see an ita-oni.

Optional Rule: Parts of the Soul

Kami: The will, mind, or "ego," usually joined with the tama but can become a kami-sama with proper rituals and worship.

Mi: The second, higher ethereal body. Connected to and stays with the body after death, dissipates over time. It serves to guard the physical body but never ventures further than a few feet from the deceased form.

Monn: The ethereal body. Connected to, and stays with body, but can become a roving evil spirit if a person died before his time.

Tama: The spirit, or higher self, called the "soul" in the West, is the only part that reincarnates.

In Japan, all humans are believed to be composed of several basic spiritual components: kami, tama, mono, and mi. These can also be used to classify a hitotsu's composition and power level. Frequently hitotsu form because these "pieces" of a person get accidentally separated after death. It's not unheard of for slithering parts of the same deceased person to form into two or even three separate hitotsu, but each oblivious to their connection.

It also follows that the more parts of a spirit are joined together in one hitotsu, the more coherent and powerful the creature. Lacking tama, a hitotsu is no more than an automaton. Lacking kami, it is without will or motivation to change things.

It should be noted that all four of these aspects of the soul integrated into a living body is the most powerful of spirits: a living human. Japanese exorcists well know this and use this knowledge to their advantage when performing their duties. Others in less savory professions, such as dark sorcery, use this same knowledge to control hitotsu and manipulate the living. A human who has one of his components stripped from him while still alive slips into a coma and can then function as a vessel for possession, or be transformed into a living zombie at the caster's bidding.

Types of Japanese Spirits

Name	*Hitotsu*	*Spirit Type*
mi-ka-nashi	lesser	mi
mono-no-ke	lesser	mono
hito-dama	lesser	kami
kitsune-bi	lesser	mono+mi
yurei	greater	kami+mi
goki	greater	kami+tamashimi
onryô	greater	kami+tama+mono+mi
kyonshi	greater	kami+tama+mono+mi

	Lesser Hitotsu		*Greater Hitotsu*	
Char.	*roll*	*avg.*	*roll*	*avg.*
INT	2D6	07	4D6	14
POW	2D6+2	09	6D6	21
SAN	0/1D8 max.		1/1D8 max.	

Weapons: POW Drain
ESP Attacks (telekinesis, pyrokinesis)

Armor: None: Insubstantial creature.

Yomi: Realms of the Dead

Hotoke: Inhabitants of Yomi

In their living days, the dead came to expect some sort of honor and posthumous veneration by their relatives. When calamity strikes and a person dies without anyone to pay respects, or they are killed in a terrible way, a ghost arises. The tragedy is that these lost souls have either been forgotten by the living or have forgotten themselves why they stayed behind in the first place. They are considered unpurified spirits that still have unfinished business in the Earth Realm and so are unable to move on to Emma-O's judgement in Yomi.

The most benign of these types of spirits are yūrei, ghosts who seek revenge against some injustice but are generally good, just a little lost. An angered spirit, or one who has suffered a severe death, may seek vengeance as an onryō, also called the black angel. There also are many other types of spirits on this spectrum. At the very bottom of the spectrum of wandering spirits is an exception to the rule: corrupt individuals who are already sentenced by Emma-O to a hellish existence in the ethereal. At first glance, they can be difficult to distinguish from simple lost souls. They are so greedy for the pleasures of life that they became tainted spirits after death. These damned, the hungry ghosts or gaki, are truly malice made manifest due to their insatiable carnal hungers.

GAKI/PRETA

Common Characteristics

In Taoist thought, hotoke are conglomerates of constricted ki energy that occur when the Yin and Yang of the natural progression of the life cycle has fallen out of balance. How hotoke vary is in their purpose, attitude toward the living, power level, attack forms, and appearance.

With a few exceptions, most all hotoke only have POW and INT statistics, like Western ghosts. Though all hotoke are basically the same creatures, their power levels and resistances allow them to be classified loosely as lesser and greater hotoke. Hotoke, when they do become visible, all appear to be made of a dimly glowing semi-transparent material, possibly ethereal ectoplasm. The more powerful the hotoke, the less transparent and the more solid the composition.

The average hotoke's attack, unless otherwise noted, matches its POW versus the target's POW on the Resistance Table. Each hotoke's attack appears a different way to the observer. If the hotoke wins the contest, the target loses 1D3 POW that cannot be regained. Likewise, if the victim is successful in resisting, the hotoke loses 1D3 POW permanently. Greater hotoke can drain 1D6 POW from a victim, but can likewise lose 1D6 POW to the target. Sanity loss to see a lesser hotoke is never more than 1D8 though greater hotoke begin at 1/1D8 Sanity loss. Hotoke are susceptible to magic attacks, and in particular, exorcism rituals by Buddhist priests.

GAKI (GAH-KEY)

Sanskrit Equivalent: Preta

English Equivalent: Hungry ghost

Spirit Type: Kami+tama+mono/greater hotoke

POW 4D6 INT 3D6

Sanity Loss: 1D4/1D8+2 Sanity points to see a gaki.

Description: Gaki have maggot-like skin, distended bellies, and needle sized orifices so they cannot have that which they desire most. These are the dead who have been judged by Emma-O to be overly lustful of the pleasures of life, but not fully deserving of the long suffering of the Hells. Their abode is in Yomi, the land of the dead, where they live in pits and excrement filled burrows on vast muddy plains.

Purpose: Gaki must endure continual sanity-stripping hunger for the duration of their wretched existence in this form. They are allowed to roam the ethereal realm so they can be close to the worldly desires they so covet but can't have. Their immateriality prevents them from harming the living. Harming them directly, anyway.

Haunts: Hungry ghosts can be found anywhere that earthly desires are in abundance, glaring on in impotent rage at that which they cannot have. Likely candidates are bars, charnel houses, dance clubs, posh restaurants, and prostitution houses. Sensitive humans can sometimes pick up a faint nauseating smell in their presence.

Attitude toward the Living: Envious and angry with them, hungry ghosts do anything they can to encourage humans to sink to their level of depravity. They often have bets between each other to see who can corrupt a human the fastest or in the most twisted way.

Special Abilities: Though unable to experience the baser joys they seek, they can inflict the searing, highly focused desires they must endure on human victims. Many times such attacks are more than a living human can endure without losing his or her sanity. This effect lasts for one scene. Roll the gaki's POW versus the target's INT on the Resistance Table. If the target loses, he or she is afflicted with one of the seven cardinal desires (anger, envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, or sloth) to the exclusion of all other drives, save self-preservation, for an entire scene or hour. If the target wins, the preta is banished to its lair in Yomi for a full week.

Dispelling: Hungry ghosts cannot be dispelled, but are vulnerable to magic. The best way to clear away a pack of hungry ghosts is to remove the source of their consternation. They will leave in search of easier fare.

HITO-DAMA (HE-TOE-DAH-MA)

English Equivalent: Will-o-wisp, restless dead.

Spirit Type: Kami/lesser hotoke

POW 1D6 INT 2D6

Sanity Loss: 0/1D2 Sanity points to see a hito-dama.

Description: A hito-dama is a dimly glowing sphere of yellow light about the size of a beach ball that hovers around chest level. They can only make a slight buzzing, humming sound and may be mistaken for a UFO by modern viewers.

Purpose: A hito-dama is the spirit of a person who cannot rest, yet hasn't the higher self intact, the kami, to correct this situation. These spirits frequently arise from much older, more powerful hotoke who have deteriorated. Another reason for the creation of a hito-dama is when a person dies with no real purpose or drive in life. The kami, or ego, is not quite satisfied with its existence on Earth and so stays on as a hito-dama as the tama moves on to reincarnate in a new incarnation in the Six Realms. But in this frustrating form it can't do much at all.

Haunts: Hito-dama stay very close to their remains. Late at night, graveyards may be littered with dozens or hundreds of these hovering, glowing balls of light.

Attitude toward the Living: Hito-dama hope that people will recognize that they need help and investigate, but they have no real means to communicate except by attack and after such an experience, people rarely offer aid.

Special Abilities: Hito-dama can engulf a person's head in an attempt to communicate. They achieve this purpose, but unfortunately it also constitutes a standard attack of a 1D3 POW drain if the victim loses. The information conveyed can either come in three-dimensional images in a target's brain or snippets of conversation one or two minutes in length.

Dispelling: Any Buddhist priest can exorcise this hotoke, but it will reappear after a month's time. The best ways to dissipate such a being are to purify the spirit through ancestor worship, or investigate its past and help it discover why it finds rest impossible.

KITSUNE-BI (KEY-SU-NAY-BEE)

English Equivalent: Fox-fires, mindless apparitions

Spirit Type: Mono+mi/lesser hotoke

POW 2D6 INT 1

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a kitsune-bi.

Description: A fox-fire appears to be a hovering ball of ghostly flame, most often green or orange in hue. It gives off no heat, but it can burn the flesh.

Purpose: Fox-fires are composed of mi, the guardian part of a spirit, and thus lack any true sentience. They only do their appointed task to the exclusion of all other things. Kitsune-bi guard the remains of a person who was buried in an unmarked grave, or in rare cases, a soul who somehow left behind this part of its spirit.

Haunts: Kitsune-bi stay very close to the grave they protect, though they sometimes can be seen traversing a predetermined route down a hill side or path back to the grave. Oft times, it is retracing the last events of the living before death..

Attitude toward the Living: Unless it feels that its grave is threatened, it doesn't bother the living. Old tales say that to see a kitsune-bi is an omen that your own death is soon at hand.

Special Abilities: Kitsune-bi vigorously protect their remains by attacking; in doing so, they attempt to engulf a target with their ghostly flames. Roll POW against the target's CON on the Resistance Table. If the target loses, he loses 1D3 CON, as burns boil up on his skin. This CON is forfeit unless a Buddhist priest can recite a sutra to lift the curse. If the victim wins, the fox-fire loses 1D3 POW and its fire dims measurably.

Dispelling: Reuniting the kitsune-bi with the rest of its soul is one way to dispel it. Another is to completely drain its POW and dissipate it.

KYONSHI (KYOH-ON-SHE), SERVITOR UNDEAD

English Equivalent: Hopping vampire.

Spirit Type: Kami+tama+mono+mi and corpse

Purpose: A kyonshi is a physical servitor undead similar to a Western zombie but with marked differences. Kyonshi are intelligent and partially free willed. They obey the wishes of their creator or owner of the statue and protect them even to their own destruction, but they also retain their personality and good or bad tendencies from life. A kyonshi will risk the wrath of their owner if they see a chance to act out on their old human nature. A kyonshi of, say, a former investigator with good tendencies might try to save a small child from danger. This willfulness and the high mystical cost of creation account for the rare number of these creatures. When they are created, kyonshi are powerful, almost immortal servitors. As long as the statue holding the soul is undamaged, they are indestructible, regenerating all physical wounds in minutes. If the statue is destroyed, the kyonshi is still undead and freewilled, but physical destruction at this point is permanent. Such "free" kyonshi are very careful, as there is no afterlife or reincarnation for them; destruction is final.

Haunts: Kyonshi have no choice but to be at the beck and call of their masters, who hold the precious black statue. Kyonshi often stay very close to the entity they are in service to.

Attitude toward the Living: Is often one of envy and angst for having lost something so precious as the spark of life. As freewilled undead, each reacts uniquely when encountering the living in their cursed state. Some become ashamed and hide their appearance behind robes while others are filled with mindless rage at the unfairness of their plight, indiscriminately killing any humans encountered.

Description: Kyonshi are vampiric reanimated dead originally derived from the fell magics of dark Taoism in mainland China and the Tantric blood rituals worshiping the Emerald Lama by the Green Caps (Dugpas) in Tibet. These "manufactured" monsters are also created in Japan through the black art of naming, Kotodama, with a spell that binds the body and soul of a person into a unique type of physical restless Hotoke in the service of the creator. (See the spell of the same name, Create Kyonshi, on page 140).

Vital to a kyonshi's well being is a small squat statue made from mysterious black stone found off the coast of Okinawa. The statue's main features are three triangular eyes on a vague humanoid form with diminutive arms and legs. This statue, "kami no ie," is the house of the kyonshi's life force.

The Chinese kanji character "kū," meaning "void" or "nothingness," is mystically etched upon the forehead of the creature upon creation. The skin of the soulless creature ranges from a pasty tint of blue, green, or red, but in low light seems to be the balmy skin of a sick person.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Indestructible: Expending 1 POW, a kyonshi can regenerate all wounds incurred in a single round.

Vampiric Feeding: Outside the natural order of life, kyonshi possess static ki, or POW in game terms. This means that POW used by the

creature is not normally regenerated so the kyonshi must occasionally replenish ki by feeding from a living being. They do this by defeating and killing a victim in physical combat. As the victim dies and the life force begins to escape from the body, the kyonshi automatically absorbs all the deceased's POW and immortal soul, the tama and kami.

Awaken the Fallen: A fallen is any being that a kyonshi has defeated in combat and drained of POW. A fallen can be recalled in service to the kyonshi, but only if the kyonshi has current POW at least equal to the creature's original statistic. This act leaves the kyonshi drained of that POW until it decides to reabsorb the essence of the fallen. The reawakened dead is in all ways the same as when alive except it is bound to the kyonshi as a servant. It will possess all the memories and personality of the living creature but must follow the orders of its master. Such manifested constructions can only be maintained for an hour and then the POW returns to the kyonshi. If a manifested fallen is killed, the kyonshi loses the POW invested in its materialization. It can, however, remanifest the fallen at a later time when it has enough POW to do so. Kyonshi use this ability sparingly as it leaves their POW reserves dangerously low and jeopardizes the chance of physical regeneration. (Investigators who knew a fallen in life and recognize him or her lose 1/1D10 SAN.)

KYONSHI (KAMI NO IE STATUE AT UPPER LEFT)

Dispelling: The surest way to dispel a kyonshi is to destroy the black statue that houses its life force and then physically destroy the undead body. This will dissipate the kyonshi forever, but it will also cause the immortal spirit of the being to disperse, lost to the ether. This will also release all the spirits of any consumed victims, fallen, housed within the kyonshi who howl and bemoan their new status as restless dead. Witnesses viewing this spectacle lose 0/1D10 SAN.

KYONSHI, Indestructible Undead Servitors

char.	*roll*	*average**
STR, CON, POW*	4D6	14
SIZ, INT	3D6	10–11
DEX	4D6+6	20
Move 12		HP 12–13

** The Kyonshi's POW is contained within the black statuette.*

Av. Damage Bonus: 0–+1D4.

Weapon: Martial Arts Fist/Punch 30%, damage 2D3+db
Bite 40%, damage 1D2+db
Weapon(s) of choice, keeper's discretion

Armor: none, but at the cost of 1 POW, a kyonshi can heal all physical wounds—even if pulped or cut into little pieces.

Spells: Soulless creatures, kyonshi are unable to cast spells.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D10 Sanity points to see a kyonshi feed or dispersed.

MO-BA-ROSHI (MOW-BAH-ROW-SHE)

English Equivalent: Phantom, phantasm recording.

Spirit Type: Mi/lesser hotoke

POW 1D6 INT 0

Sanity Loss: 0/1 Sanity points to see a mo-ba-roshi.

Description: Mo-ba-roshi can manifest as many things; as objects, a cold wind, or even several phantasms acting out a scene. Lacking sentience, they are very insubstantial in comparison to other types of hotoke and are perhaps the weakest. The only threat to people a mo-ba-roshi poses is to Sanity.

Purpose: Mo-ba-roshi are the imprinted memories of a dead person or a place where a horrible event occurred. When conditions are similar to the original event, the mo-ba-roshi plays out the scene that caused its formation.

Haunts: Mo-ba-roshi never stray from their scene of re-enactment.

Attitude toward the Living: none.

Special Abilities: If a person is unfortunate enough to walk into the path of a re-enactment by a mo-ba-roshi, the spirit will attack and attempt to possess the human in order to act out the scene. If the mo-ba-roshi wins a contest of its POW against the target's POW on the Resistance Table, it can force the target to re-enact the scene.

Dispelling: Completely destroying the site of the re-enactment often dispels a mo-ba-roshi.

MONO-NO-KE (MOW-NOH-NOH-KAY)

English Equivalent: Ancient identity-less spirit.

Spirit Type: Mono/lesser hotoke

POW 2D6 INT 1D3

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to commit crimes while possessed by a mono-no-ke.

Description: Animalistic in aspect, these hotoke appear in vague black shapes of menacing animals. Most humans instinctively feel unnerved in their presence even if they are not aware of them visually.

Purpose: A mono-no-ke is a body's guardian mono that has abandoned its task. It does vaguely remember it is supposed to be guarding a body and so it continually attempts to gain a new one.

Haunts: Mono-no-ke often linger around graveyards and temples. They often inhabit stray animals that wander into their domain and use the bodies to search for human victims.

Attitude toward the Living: Mono-no-ke are always perceived as evil by humans due to the threat of possession. Mono-no-ke see any humans they can overwhelm as potential hosts.

Special Abilities: Mono-no-ke, in their desire for another body, attempt to possess the living. Since animals are easy to possess, mono-no-ke often already inhabit animals when encountered. When a mono-no-ke attacks, a black cloud oozes across the ground, creeps up the legs, and envelops the target. Roll the mono-no-ke's POW versus the victim's CON. If the mono-no-ke wins the target loses 1D3 CON; if the target wins, the mono-no-ke loses 1D3 POW. The mono-no-ke will continue this attack until the target is drained of CON and then possess the body. At this point the target's mono is dislodged and the mono-no-ke takes control of the body. The person is still in control of his faculties, only the possessing hotoke controls the body. Often the possessing spirit will act out scenes from its previous life, but only in distorted and vague parodies. This can lead to incidents of chaos and murder with the victim a conscious witness to the whole horrifying spectacle, causing a 1/1D6 Sanity loss.

Dispelling: Once in a body, mono-no-ke are not vulnerable to magic attacks; only spells that damage the body damage the hotoke. Killing the host dislodges the spirit but at obvious cost to the host. Exorcism by a Buddhist priest is the exception. The problem is, once the mono-no-ke is free, the original mono of the host must be restored or the victim falls into a coma and dies in 1D6 days.

Onryô/Go-Ryô (ON-REE-YO)

English Equivalent: black angel of death; evil personage.

Spirit Type: Kami+rama+monoyimi/greater hotoke

POW 6D6 INT 4D6

Sanity Loss: 1D4/1D8+2 Sanity points to see an onryô.

Description: An onryô is essentially an ancestral kami of hostile disposition, the malevolent spirit of a person of rank or influence who didn't die a natural death or died in a state of extreme anger or resentment. They appear as they did in life but with a much darker aspect, or as a 12-foot high black cloaked skeleton: death manifest.

Purpose: An onryô was a person of great will or spirit whose life was cut off unnaturally and who intends to make everybody pay for the affront. They are eaten away by hate and are beyond redemption. Such spirits are incredibly evil by human standards, as their continual desire for power has warped them into a totally alien mindset.

Haunts: Onryô sometimes haunt their monument or mausoleum, but are not constrained to one place.

Attitude toward the Living: Onryô see humans as sheep that exist to supply it with power.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Possession: Attacks a target by matching its POW against the target's on the Resistance Table. If it wins, the onryô drains 1D6 POW and adds the drained POW to its own. If it loses, the hotoke loses 1D3 POW. Once it drains a target to 0 POW, the onryô can then possess the body over the course of 1D6 rounds; the soul of the target is destroyed in the process. (If the possession is disturbed before completion, the original soul can be restored by a priest.) Lacking connection to the original soul, the body is not completely in sync with its new tenant and slowly deteriorates. Over the course of the next 1D6 months, the possessed body rots away. The onryô takes great pains to disguise this, but finally must abandon it.

Puppetry (Temporary Possession): A recently-created onryô is unable to perform full possession to permanently take over a human body. (The keeper decides how "mature" the onryô is.) The creature is only able to effect a weaker form of control, puppetry. The onryô attacks a target by matching its POW against the target's magic points on the Resistance Table. If it wins, the onryô drains 1D6 magic points; if it loses, the onryô loses 1D3 magic points. If the target has no magic points left, the onryô instantly possesses the mind of the target and is able to control the body for 3D6 rounds. During this interval, the victim's awareness is forced into the deepest recesses of his or her psyche while the onryô is dominant. After puppetry, the host has no memory of events and is quite weak. The host also needs to make a 1/1D6 SAN check after touching the mind of an entity so foul.

Attribute Increase: Some onryô can invest POW to heighten a host's physical attributes (STR, CON, and DEX) at a cost of 1 POW per attribute point increase.

Essence Drain: Following a successful roll of the onryô's POW against the desired ability of the target, the onryô can drain 1D3 points of that ability. Unless drained to 0 points, which causes coma, the ability returns at a rate of 1 point per day of bed rest. Draining a target to 0 CON kills the target. Furthermore, whenever an onryô kills a victim via CON drain, it automatically gains 1D6 POW from that target.

POW Replenishment: Since an onryô is in essence a very warped kami, the fear it generates in the living causes it to regenerate 1D3 POW a day.

Dispelling: Once formed, nothing can stop an onryô, so most people practice prevention. Feudal warriors were known to try to appease the spirits of slain enemies to prevent an onryô from forming. Buddhist monks and ascetics are solicited to perform religious services for such vengeful spirits. At times, onryô are deified to avoid their wrath. They are vulnerable to magic attacks but are vicious in their revenge.

ONRYÔ

Yûrei (YOU-RAY), Ghost or Vengeful Spirit

Spirit Type: Kami+rama/greater hotoke

POW 5D6 INT 4D6

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see a yûrei's "death mask."

Description: Closest in nature to Western ghosts, yûrei are the best known hotoke to everyday people.

yukiko miyamoto, yûrei

Yukiko's abilities as a yûrei are quite different from those in the standard yûrei entry. Yukiko is one of those rare yûrei who still retains much of her humanity and some of self. She is either afraid to use her yûrei abilities to their full potential (thus hurting those around her), doesn't yet know how, or is unable to tap into them as long as she still has a solid emotional connection with the world of the living through Ryoma. No matter the reason, Yukiko is a unique yûrei, though there are sure to be a few others out there like her as yûrei are the most free-willed type of undead in the Japanese setting. When Ryoma dies due to old age or misfortune, Yukiko will lose all ties to the living except her need for vengeance against her killers. In her grief, Yukiko will undoubtedly "evolve" almost instantly into a full yûrei, probably killing anybody nearby in the process. See "Light and Shadow," pages 157-169, and Yukiko's stats on page 198.

Jigoku

The eight hot hells of Jigoku are believed by Mythos scholars to be parts of a separate dimension connected to Earth through portals within the ruins of Yoth, N'kai, and Zin. Due to the red glow of Yoth, it can be difficult to determine when a person has first entered the threshold of Jigoku. Often though, the stifling heat and lava pools quickly erase any doubt as to one's location. It is known that the oni have repeatedly raided the Vaults of Zin for their ruler Emma-O and the passages of Zin allow oni easy access to the Dreamlands.

The Eight Cold Hells are situated in the frozen Oort Cloud of comets beyond Pluto. With endless frozen vistas, mind numbing cold and desolate isolation for the damned, oni don't generally visit these hells. Even protected from the cold, mortal visitors suffer a constant drain of Sanity (1 point every 10 minutes). At zero SAN they become trapped as the damned, healing each day to suffer all over again. When scryed through a dimensional portal, Utpala, Padma, and Mahapadma (see the sidebar on page 244) appear as serenely beautiful alien landscapes covered in endless fields of open lotus blossoms. Many Buddhist monks have mistaken these hells for the Pure Lands and journeyed there, only to realize their mistake too late.

It is not certain just who or what Emma-O is. It may be an Elder God as appears on the surface or an avatar of Tsathoggua, the Great Old One whose influence is so prominent in subterranean Yoth and N'Kai. Another possibility is that Emma-O is in fact Ythogtha. Indeed, Emma-O's kingdom of "Yomi," the native Japanese name for the ancient pre-Buddhist land of the dead, may be a linguistic corruption of "Yoth" from where the oni race are conjectured to originate. It may also be a logical assumption that "Jigoku" is in fact the black gulf of N'kai. It is uncertain if oni are descendants of Yothians or N'kaians or merely claimed parts of the deserted city underneath Japan. Their towering size may also point to them being related somehow to the degenerate giants, the gugs, but such an association is unlikely.

It is unclear what connections there are between the race of oni and the gyaa-yothn race created by the K'n-yan people. It is possible that the servitor race gyaa-yothans are in fact derived partly derived from oni generic stock.

Oni have frequent dealings with Nyogtha and its formless spawn which roam in Yoth and N'kai. Oni also actively maintain a stone temple in the form of four torii shrine gates in each cardinal direction where they worship Shudde M'ell. The numerous Shinto shrine gates in Japan act as dimensional portals and allow oni easy access to most of that country. The oni race's role as tormentors of humanity may arise from their ability to sense corruption within humans: they seek out such individuals and drag them down to their realm for sacrifice or ritual. The eight hot hells indirectly describe different types of ritual

Yûrei have long disheveled black hair, white faces, and blue veins visible under their "flesh." Their hands droop down with long, exaggerated and spindly digits and they are usually dressed in white burial kimonos. Unlike Western ghosts, yûrei have no legs. Rather, the lower torso trails off into an insubstantial wisp making for the appearance that the horoke is hovering. Yûrei often bear the cause of their death on their form. This can sometimes be quite horrifying to see. To scare victims, they can also appear as their bodies actually look in the grave—decayed and desiccated.

Purpose: Yûrei exist because injustice has been done to their person in the past, be it a murder unavenged, or a relative not yet properly laid to rest. Once satisfied, they peacefully go on to the next incarnation. Often, they are so full of rage at their plight that they scare away all but the bravest who might help. Compounding this problem, they usually exist in their state so long that they forget *why* they want revenge, only that they seek it.

Haunts: A yûrei sticks close to the reason for its purpose, be it its own grave, or a relative it couldn't protect in life. Even if it can't remember why it does so, it is impossible to convince a yûrei to abandon its quest.

Attitude toward the Living: If a yûrei sees a human that resembles someone it knew, it may befriend or attack without warning. (Yûrei are potentially a rich source of lore and history by investigators for their long existences, but such exchanges require something in trade and it's not wise to cheat such passionate entities.)

Special Abilities: When a yûrei attacks, it appears to claw at a target with its distorted hands, leaving red streaking welts on the target's skin. A yûrei can drain 1D6 POW in an attack, but if it loses such a contest it loses 1D3 POW. If drained to 0 POW it dissipates but reforms after only one week, so strong is its passion for justice. In its most horrid visage, a death mask, a Yûrei can cause 1/1D8 Sanity loss.

Dispelling: Simple as performing the unfinished task the yûrei requires, but it's never that easy except with recent creations and a great deal of research into historical records may be required to take this route. On the more mystical side, joining a forgetful yûrei with its mumo or oni can help it remember its purpose and thus dissipate it. There is a risk, however, of creating a more powerful onryô if the investigator is unsuccessful in resolving the yûrei's conflicts.

YÛREI AND KITSUNE-BI

sacrifices. It is of note that the fourth book of the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsien*, which deals with summoning and dismissing demons, includes spells for summoning oni.

Jigoku Gateways

PERMANENT GATES

One way to Jigoku is to find one of the permanent Gates which the oni use for travel. Once found, often in strangely appropriate locations, access to the hell on the other side is simply a matter of knowing the activation phrase. Oni are not incredibly bright and are as likely to use the name of their ruling oni king as the name of the hell to activate Gates. Overhearing the spoken phrase is yet another way to gain access. Transport is quite safe and quick; it's upon arriving on the other end of the Gate that things become dangerous. Cultists often know the location of several Gates in order to summon oni as servitors. The size of the Gate is usually only large enough for one oni to use and so larger monsters like Great Old Ones cannot use these portals. However, during planetary alignments and other special days when the Mythos forces are right, these Gates open on their own accord and stay open, becoming two-way Gates. At these times they also stretch to allow much larger beings such as Great Old Ones through.

THE GATE SPELL

The second method to enter Jigoku is to use the Gate spell. Researching the destination, the ruling oni king and a possible safe landing zone are vital for successful creation.

THE *JIGOKU ZOSHI*

Closely tied to this dimension are *The Jigoku Zoshi*, *The Scrolls of the Hells*, designed by a Buddhist priest. The priest Jokan intended to show what lay ahead for the ignorant and carefully illustrated scenes depicting the various hells with the aid of an oni advisor. Due to his cunning oni helper Daraku, the scrolls were subverted from their original intention and upon completion became a cursed work useful only to the foolish and power mad. With the *Jigoku Zoshi*, a cultist can summon forth an oni, or even an army of them, scry the hells and open Gateways to them. Needless to say, oni are always on the lookout for copies of this work. Several other later works are derived from this rich source of Jigoku lore, the *Mahafushigi Meiki* among them.

EMMA-O (EN-MA-OH), ELDER GOD

Realmslu Equivalent: Yama

> *I began to question Kentaro's sanity, as it was his insistence that had led us to this cursed place. Before us towered a massive bone table flanked by two hideous beasts. Stern eyes peered from behind the bench, a scrolling behemoth who scrutinized us as if we were but insects. I felt a shiver as if those eyes could see through my soul. I could look no longer as the black void in his eyes dissolved my nerve. Silently, the being opened a large tome before him and began to solemnly turn the pages.*

Said to have been the first mortal man, Emma was therefore the first mortal to die and occupy Yomi, the land of the dead. There, Emma-O established a kingdom of the dead that was a paradise and the final destination for spirits to rest. In his kingdom, Emma-O judged his own kin as they was expired in the material realm. However, mankind became wicked and corrupt and as these dead arrived in Yomi, so Emma-O's kingdom quickly became a gloomy place where the morals of dead were forced to suffer by these new arrivals. At some point, to preserve the Yin and Yang balance, Yomi fractured into two domains: Yama, a heaven for peaceful dead, and Yomi, a dark limbo for the unwanted and soulless dead. Still, Emma-O was forced to do something with the growing population of disagreeable spirits in Yomi. These hungry ghosts, or gaki (pucas), still lusted for a life no longer theirs. Other kinds of even less fortunate dead also arrived in Yomi. Consigned to Emma-O's limbo domain with no place else to go, they were mindless spirits who had been forgotten by kin and would eventually fade out of existence—the worst fate for an ancestor spirit. A soul not remembered and enshrined is a spirit without identity.

It is uncertain when, but at some point Emma-O began to employ oni as his agents. The oni shuttle spirits tainted with bad karma off to a terrible dimension called Jigoku where the fiends dole out punishments to those deserving damned. No one else wanting the responsibility, Emma-O also took the dimension of Jigoku into his rule.

Though Emma-O is considered by humans as the ruler of both Yomi, Yama, and the various hot and cold hells of Jigoku, he is more

than content to allow powerful oni kings to act as wardens of each domain. The oni lords rule over their respective hells with their subjects, lower ranked oni, administering the tortures to the unfortunates consigned there. Emma-O maintains a closer eye on his kingdom of Yomi, though his palace lies in Yama. (In *Cthulhu Japan*, Tengoku and Yama are one and the same.) In Yomi, he sits behind a massive bone table with two oni lords—one red and one blue—as his companions. On this throne Emma-O sits in merciless judgement on each human spirit's accumulated karma. It is his pronouncements, after reading the person's deeds from the *Karmic Record*, that determine where the dead will next incarnate in the Six Realms; whether in the depths of the molten hells or as a deity in the blissful realm of the heavens.

It's small wonder that with three domains in Emma-O's charge, errant wards get loose and the Earth Realm suffers for it. Deity though Emma-O is, a few rebellious beings such as ghosts and oni now and then slip through his fingers and harry those in the mortal plane.

The Mythos tome *The Tao of Immortality*, or *Fumetsu no Dōkyō* in Japanese, is one of the most common ways that alchemists and cultists contact or call Emma-O to the Earth plane. This work is riddled with errors depending upon the copy used, and can inadvertently call forth any number of entities to a tragically unprepared alchemist. Despite these dangers, those who seek immortality find it an invaluable resource as it contains most of the steps required to achieve that elusive goal.

For those foolish enough to summon Emma-O to the Earthly Realm, he arrives full of wrath over the interruption to his tasks. Emma-O's visage of a thick black beard and hair on a scowling ebony face greets the summoner. Glowering from behind his massive bone table Emma-O waits for the summoner's request. Upon the chalky bone surface of his table rests a kirin quill filled with blood and the tome of judgement, the *Karmic Record*. Flanking each side of his throne are his two towering oni lord guardians. Emma-O can judge any soul who stands before his throne, even the living, and plunge the individual into whatever dimension in the Six Realms the being is deserving of. If attacked while materialized on Earth, his two oni defenders, being consummate specimens of that servitor race, intervene. Emma can also assume a much more horrid visage if he so chooses, that of a skeletal monstrosity dripping fleshy viscera, which can challenge any viewer's sanity.

CULT: Though Emma holds a well-respected place in the celestial court of devas, he has no human worshipers. Those who do show him deference do so out of fear, as he grants no favors in response. Entreaties by mortals seeking to cheat death are better spent on the Taoist Jade Emperor.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Judge Karma: When a being stands before his throne, Emma-O is able to consult the *Karmic Record* and judge them. If a being's true name is known and recited by Emma-O, their entry will appear on the pages no matter where in the universe they reside, though Emma-O is unable to judge them without their physical presence. In this tome is recorded all the past deeds, thoughts, and actions of every being in all the incarnations it ever existed in. This alone is a powerful reason to consult the *Karmic Record* for the secrets and history it contains. Some alchemists summon Emma-O as a stage of seeking immortality. After 1D6 rounds of consultation, Emma-O determines the balance of good versus bad karma of a being and where they are destined to be incarnated next based on their current path. This pronouncement is not set in stone, but knowing one's destiny tends to alter a being's actions and can eat away at the mind. Such an experience always grants a being 1D3 points of Cthulhu Mythos skill from coming to understand the true nature of the universe a little better.

Turning the Karmic Wheel: Upon consulting the *Karmic Record*, which takes 1D6 rounds, if a person is found to possess a fair amount of bad karma as evidenced by actions of ignorance such as killing, cheating, and stealing, Emma-O is able to pass judgement upon the person. Unless the target can flee the scene or dismiss Emma-O from the Earthly Realm, Emma-O drains a victim of his life force at a rate of 1 POW and CON per round. The effects of this drain are quite vivid as the victim's body slowly melts and rots away from the outside in. The victim is alive the entire duration of this spell and sanity checks may be required by the victim and any witnesses viewing this spectacle. Upon reaching 0 POW, the victim is dead and is forced to reincarnate into the appropriate realm his deeds have earned him. This punishment is, of course, up to the keeper; it is a good opportunity to look at an investigator's past actions, but not dwell on technicalities. Rather, the humanity the investigator shows in his actions should be considered. If a reprehensible action was done for a greater good then Emma-O might overlook it in his pronouncement, up to a point.

EMMA-O, Ruler of Yomi, Judge of the Newly Dead

STR 20	CON 40	SIZ 45	INT 70	
POW 80	DEX 20	APP n/a	Move 12	HP 43

Damage Bonus: none. Emma-O does not engage in physical conflict.

Weapon: none.

Armor: none. Immune to all but magical attacks. Attacked, Emma will employ his oni lord bodyguards.

Spells: Any as appropriate.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see Emma-O; 1D6/1D10 to see his death visage.

Red and Blue Oni Lord Bodyguards*

** For stats, use oni lord characteristics (see page 246) at maximum values.*

Weapon: Tetsu-Bo (8' long iron club) 65%, damage 1D10+db
Bite 20%, damage 1D6
Stomp 45%, damage 1D6+db

Armor: 2 points of thick, bony hide.

Spells: Summon Oni, Create Gate.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see an oni lord.

ONI (OH-KNEE), GREATER SERVITOR RACE

The word oni translates into English as either "ogre" or "fiend"—accurate appraisals of these beings. Buddhist priests declare that oni are physical manifestations of the cosmic force of evil, malignant beings that easily travel between the realms of the living and the dead to taunt and torture humankind. This humanoid race has long been considered uniformly cruel by the Japanese.

Servants of Yomi, the underworld of the dead, as well as Jigoku, the Buddhist hells, oni serve more powerful beings as enforcers, torturers, and guardians. That is, if they are kept on a tight leash—for if left to their own devices, oni can cause untold suffering on Earth. Emma-O, the regent of Jigoku, is considered the lord and ruler of the oni. The entity Emma-O is always escorted by a red oni and a blue oni of the highest rank during his judgements, who are often eagerly waiting for permission to drag a dying soul down to the hells for torture.

Though they vary wildly in overall appearance, oni all bear several basic features. Physically imposing at eight to twenty feet tall, all oni are heavily muscled and use only a tetsu-bo (tet-sue-bow): a massive eight-foot long studded iron club. These beasts have three-digit hands, three-toed clawed feet, and sometimes even have three matching eyes. All have at least one horn, usually in the center of the head, but some-

times in some other random location of the crown. Higher ranked oni have two cone-shaped horns situated on the sides of the head like a bull. Oni skin tone varies, ranging from the hues of deep crimson to phosphorescent green. They wear loincloths made of tiger skin. These beasts are extremely hairy by Eastern standards, having copious hair on their legs, forearms, brow, and oft times thick wiry beards erupting from their face. Oni faces are shocking in their ugliness, bearing a mix of the partial features of pigs, bats, and birds on the same visage. Protruding from a large mouth riddled with sharpened fangs are two characteristically large lower eye-teeth. Oni are generally acknowledged to carry many infectious diseases and dedicate themselves to making life unpleasant for humans on Earth as well as in the hells.

Female oni, called hannya, are hideously ugly but able to generate illusions to disguise themselves as beautiful human females for a short time. Few in number, hannya act as temptresses of mankind and the guardians of the valued treasures of greater beings. Apart from their powers of deception, hannya have the same abilities and appearance as male oni though they do have vaguely female features in their grotesque oni form.

In days past, oni would often claim a remote island or sparsely populared area on Earth as their own and build massive fort-like strongholds there. In these oni strongholds, human prisoners would be held and treated as cattle. Life in an oni citadel is hell on Earth for such prisoners, as their oni jailers feast on human flesh and partake of human blood as drink during nightly dark rituals in worship to shadowy entities. If left to their own devices, such oni will begin to summon all manner of beings from other dimensions for company and entertainment in their fortress, considerably fouling the neighboring lands in the process. In ancient times, a warrior of great skill and bravery would be called upon to cleanse the land of such oni infestation. One such account survives in the tale of *Rathomon*, a diluted recounting of the events that led to the creation of the artifact known today as the Iron Banded Box, which is said to contain the severed limb of a powerful oni prince.

In common folklore towards the end of the Edo Period (1600–1868), people came to see oni as dichotomous and even ironic creatures—in some situations even as parodies of human failings. When actually faced with one of these brutish creatures, the result is anything but humorous, except perhaps to the oni.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Oni battle tactics are quite brutish but highly effective. In combat, an oni will use its massive iron studded club, the tetsu-bo, to subdue an opponent. Once a victim has been secured, an oni then will take its time slowly torturing the victim, taking care to drive them insane with pain as the oni slowly picks apart the limbs of a person much like a small child would pull the wings off a fly. Oni are cowardly by nature, to them might makes right, so oni will cower from a stronger opponent but bully a weaker one.

Despite their many advantages over humans, oni can be killed; many times in Japanese myth and history is recorded the martial prowess of great heroes who proceed to annihilate entire populations of troublesome oni. For the average human though, an oni is more than a match in malicious creativity and sheer physical power.

Oni move between the dimensions of Yomi, Jigoku, and the earth by numerous Gateways well known only to them. They are also able to personally walk between worlds with an expenditure of 1 magic point, but this takes one full action to enact and the full concentration of the oni. They also are known to take new spirits of the dead, and on occasion living passengers, with them on their journeys to deposit in one of the hells or Yomi.

ONI

ONI, Tormentors of

Humanity

Stat:	*commoner rolls*	*lord/king rolls*
STR	6D6+14 (35)	6D6+30 (51)
CON	3D6+12 (22–23)	3D6+18 (28–29)
SIZ	4D6+18 (32)	6D6+18 (39)
INT	2D6+2 (9)	3D6 (10–11)
POW	3D6 (10–11)	5D6 (17–18)
DEX	3D6 (10–11)	3D6+2 (12–13)
HP	27–28	34

Move 10

**Averages for each oni type are listed in parentheses.*

Av. Damage Bonus:# +3D6/+5D6.

#Ratings for each oni type are separated by slashes.

Weapons: Tetsu-Bo (8' iron club) 45%, damage 1D10+db
Bite 20%, damage 1D6 (no db)
Stomp 35%, damage 1D6+db

Armor: 1 point of thick, bony hide (2 points for oni lords and kings).

Spells: Oni with POW 10 or greater will know 1 or 2 spells.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see an oni.

UNFORTUNATE WITNESSES TO THE OPENING OF A GATE TO ONE OF THE HOT HELLS

Mythos Entities in the Six Realms

Astral Serpents

Japanese: Hoshi Hebi

For millennia, tens of thousands of serpent people loyal to the Great Old One Yig have survived the destruction of Mu by slumbering in the ancient underwater ruins near Okinawa. Each body is held secure within a pod, carefully maintained in suspended animation but with minds still awake, fully aware. They wait for a time when the world is ripe for their return. Unlike the degenerate variant now roaming the earth, many serpent people who slumber are prime mental specimens of their race—leaders, priests and scientists. The restless minds of such advanced beings require stimulation, and in the first years, many hibernating serpent people died, trapped in the physical prisons of their inert bodies. These mindless husks still rest in the vast chambers of the great underwater basalt pyramids off the coast of Okinawa.

Eventually, a few of the more adventurous sleepers delved into the secrets of the mind and discovered that they could detach the astral part of their being, their spirit and will, from their sleeping bodies. These first few explored the realm of the astral and ethereal and discovered the trap of Hydra but most quickly avoided her and found that in this state, they could communicate with each other and the restless dead of humans, ghosts. They also discovered to their dismay that they could not maintain a separated state from their physical body for long periods as it was mentally and spiritually draining.

MUVIAN SERPENT PERSON

As more and more hibernating serpent people chanced upon this ability to astrally project, several impatient and rash explorers foolishly tested how long they could remain separated from their bodies before they absolutely HAD to replenish their energies. They were rewarded with the rural dissipation of their spirits. In desperation, and at the edge of dissolution after one of these trials, one lucky experimenter chanced to attach to a living human's aura, the astrally visible outer shell of a human's soul anchored to the living physical body. This astrally projected serpent found it highly replenishing to feed off the energies emanating from the protective barrier of the human's soul. This pioneer shared its accidental discovery with fellow serpents and further experimentation showed that while humans have a natural barrier, the aura, that prevents energy theft and possession of the physical body, concerted efforts can chip through this protective shell to access the nourishing soul-force within.

It wasn't long after that astrally projecting serpents became able to superimpose their own essence upon a human aura and "hitchhike," all the while slowly draining the human of spiritual life essence. Another benefit of this parasitic connection was that the astral serpent became "in tune" with the human's mind and could inject suggestions into the mind of a human, who believed them normal thoughts. With the intervention of human agents, the Dragon Lords, they were able to take this symbiotic relationship with their hosts a step farther and astrally dominate the victims. If attached long enough, an astral serpent could completely drain a human of all life force and take over the body as a vessel.

However, they found some humans more difficult to latch onto and drain; it turned out that the explanation for this was that people descended from Muvian stock and by extension, vestigial serpent-human hybrid genetic stock, were more genetically compatible and easier to form a bond with. (Those of Muvian blood are the nephilim, who have been leaders and royalty throughout recorded history. Children of the fallen race mentioned in the Book of Enoch, combined with the astral serpents, are responsible for the cult of the serpent worldwide and the subtle subjugation of the human race.)

Able to stay removed from their inert bodies for indefinite periods provided they had a receptive human host, the astral serpents began to formulate a plan. Using Muvian descendants and human cultists such as the Dragon Lords as vessels, the hibernating serpent people placed astrally dominated humans in positions of temporal power. For many centuries entire lines of royalty were controlled. In recent history they have taken over political leaders, bureaucrats, captains of industry, and media personalities. Today, many world leaders and figureheads are so controlled by astral serpents, most unwillingly—their souls astrally overlaid by serpent folk spirits, eventually to be consumed by the parasitic invaders. The astral serpents' ultimate plan is to place either a serpent possessed human or a physical serpent person cloaked in illusionary human form in every position of power in the world. With the exception of key members of the imperial family, most of the Japanese political and bureaucratic leaders are already compromised. Astral serpents have made great headway into other countries as well; wherever large multinational Japanese corporations hold sway, secret societies loyal to the astral serpent's cause, such as the Dragon Lords, are on the scene "colonizing" the leaders of the local populace.

Few, if any, humans can naturally detect astral serpents. Those that can see them also see ghosts and other ethereal phenomena. (A successful Clairvoyance, Channel Spirit or Meditation roll will reveal an astral serpent.)

APPEARANCE: Astral serpents have two forms:

Astral Parasite: When they are astrally dominating a human host, they resemble their physical body, that is, a nine-foot-tall ghostly outline of a humanoid serpent superimposed upon the physical human form.

Astral Hunter: When an astral serpent is freely roaming the astral plane in search of auric food, it resembles a squashed spider with a flat, pancake shaped body the size of a soccer ball with two crab-like legs on each side of the disc-shaped body. On the top of the flat body is a pair of cold green eyes; on the bottom of the astral creature is a tight circular mouth with a long, serpent tongue, which bores through a human aura to feed on the energy within.

Note: *The form a being's energy takes in the astral is determined by its will, not its physical mortal shell. The natural most economic shape for any energy in the astral is a sphere. Due to the long durations the astral serpents spend in the astral realm untethered to a physical body, they assume a spider-like form which requires the least amount of willpower to maintain.*

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Astral Feeding (Astral Hunter Form): Astral serpents can feed from any human, but find those of Muvian descent naturally easier to feed on. Initial symptoms for victims of an astral attack are a general uneasy feeling and insomnia as the monster attaches to the human's aura and begins to deplete the protective outer barrier of the victim's spirit. In later stages of feeding, an afflicted person may easily become depressed or ill; they also seem to suffer from a general malaise of the spirit. (Those not of Muvian descent, namely those not ethnic Japanese, Korean or Pacific Islander, gain a +2 bonus to POW checks to resist astral feeding. Ainu and Okinawans gain a +1 bonus. Those of imperial blood receive a –2 to –8 penalty on POW rolls.)

ASTRAL HUNTER

During feeding, a human host is attacked at one of his or her seven *chakra* points, the astral hunter's long raspy tongue boring directly through the human's aura at one of the seven yogic energy centers. (See the "Chakras" sidebar nearby.) Commonly, the solar plexus is a favored chakra, though the third eye chakra and the heart chakra are secondary and third choices, respectively. (The astral hunter in the picture at left is most likely feeding upon the salaryman's heart chakra, affecting the man's nerves.) For those able to see astral phenomena (including those who successfully use Clairvoyance, Channel *Spirit* or Meditation), a host human's aura is visibly less luminous, with a spider-like grotesquerie covering the human's face, chest, or back. People would be stunned to see just how many humans already have an astral hunter attached to them.

Chakras

Chakras, each symbolized as a flower blossom, run the length of the spine, acting as a conduit for the person's abundant ki energy that flows forth from these seven energy nexus points in the human body. One practice of Kundalini meditation is the attempt to open all seven chakras in a controllable manner. Successful practitioners are able to start a strong current of ki energy starting at the root chakra in the groin. In turn, the opening of each successive energy center adds to the strength and purity of the ki as it travels up the spine in an ever stronger tide. One effect is the practitioner is able to tap into the ambient ki in his natural surroundings to replenish and refresh his own ki. This ability keeps a person in perfect mental, spiritual, and physical condition. The average, modern human usually has only one or two chakras functioning perfectly at any time; such chakras' influence are seen by observers as the person's character strengths. In addition, many people often have one or two chakras nearly always closed. For example, a fully open and powerful shinzo chakra allows a person to be an excellent communicator; he may be seen as a persuasive speaker by associates. Other chakras partially open in times of emotional or spiritual stress but others are remain untapped. With such a state of affairs, it is no wonder when enlightened sages or Yoga masters seem able to perform seemingly impossible feats such as piercing limbs with nails and not bleeding. Through chakras they are able to harness the fullest potential of their beings. The ki in most people however is stagnant and blocked. Remember that ki is best when it is constantly moving. When it stagnates like a still pond of water it becomes detrimental to good health.

ASTRAL PARASITE

The victim must roll a POW x3 check once every hour. Two consecutive failed checks means the astral hunter drains 1D4 magic points and has latched on. The victim may faint or experience extreme nausea at the moment of attachment. Thereafter, two consecutive successful POW x3 rolls will dislodge the parasite, but this becomes increasingly difficult as time passes.

Victims of astral feeding don't recover all of their magic points with a night's rest. It begins slowly, with only one magic point failing to recover. Then, the number of magic points that fails to replenish each new week of feeding continues to increase as the astral hunter weakens the victim's aura and begins to feed directly on the spirit. (The maximum number of magic points for an astral feeding victim falls by 1 point per week. People of Muvian descent lose 3 magic points per week.)

Astral Domination (Embodied Serpent Person): To begin this process, the serpent person must obtain samples of hairs and nail clippings to construct a straw doll of his target.

(The serpent sacrifices 1 POW point to the doll and begins a nightly ritual requiring human blood sacrifice equal to the target's SIZ rating, in which the doll is soaked.)

Astral Domination (Disembodied Astral Serpent): Much more skilled in this realm than its physical kin, an astral serpent need only perform astral feeding until the human target can no longer regenerate magic points and is drained to zero magic points over the many weeks of feeding. With the auric shell disintegrated, the soft inner core of the human spirit is exposed: after sacrificing 1 POW, the astral hunter can proceed to attempt astral domination as outlined below.

The target of a serpent person's astral domination is approached in dreams nightly, with the defending human rolling POW against the attacker's POW on the Resistance Table. Success indicates that the human awakens from a ghastly nightmare involving snakes, dragons, and other serpentine horrors, but only suffers a sleepless night for their troubles. If the astral serpent wins, however, the victim loses 1 POW, and at the keeper's option, 1 point of Sanity for the vivid dreams.

This process continues nightly until the victim is reduced to a coma at 1 POW, at which point the serpent person sacrifices another permanent POW and binds itself into the body of the victim, easily dominating the weakened soul. To observers, the dominated human awakens from a long sickness seemingly none the worse for wear but actually now just an empty three-piece suit for a cold and calculating serpent person.

An Incomplete Disguise: For those who can see auras or into the invisible spirit world, the hulking but ghostly form of a lizard nine feet tall can be seen superimposed over the physical form of the human. (This can be seen through a successful Clairvoyance, Channel Spirit, or Meditation roll.) Even with people who cannot discern auras, something is still "not right" about these individuals, as the disguise is never total. Some astrally dominated hosts gradually develop slightly serpentine facial features while others are recognizable by cold emotionless reptilian eyes staring out of an otherwise human face. Many of the conspiracy rants and urban legends about alien lizards taking over the human race are derived from the uneasy feeling evoked by proximity to an astrally dominated human. Few conspiracy enthusiasts know how close to truth they are.

ASTRAL SERPENTS, Spiritual Parasites

char.	*rolls*	*averages**
STR/CON/SIZ/DEX*	3D6	10–11
INT	5D6	17–18
POW	6D6	21

**All physical abilities are those of the host, usually human.*

Weapon: None, dependent upon host's abilities.

Armor: None, but serpent possessed political leaders wear Kevlar vests for protection (8 points of armor).

Spells: Without a physical body, astral serpents are unable to cast spells.

Sanity Loss: Disguised in human form, 0, 0/1D6 Sanity points to witness the astral form, or that of a serpent person who has dropped his illusionary human form.

Aku-Shin Kage (AH-COO-SHIN KAH-GAY), Avatar of Nyarlathotep

We were too late to stop the cultists. Blood poured from every joint and crevice of the summoned being's coal-black samurai armor and the room reeked of the coppery smell. I could only stand in mute terror as it advanced on my brother-in-law with the six-foot long katana it held for a striking blow. All we could hope for was a swift end. Then, then I made the mistake of trying to see the face of my executioner. My god, the face. . . .

—Lafcadio Hearn, *Supernaturalia Japonica.*

When followers in Japan summon Nyarlathotep, this native Japanese avatar appears. Humanoid in shape, its most distinguishing feature is that the avatar is dressed in a full suit of blackened samurai o-yoroi armor. (O-yoroi is made of enameled metal plates woven into a very ornamental design for a light but effective suit of protection.) But, where unprotected parts of the body would normally be seen by the viewer, like the upper arms, legs, and head, it is instead an amorphous shadow that shifts within the suit. Those who are brave enough to look into the hooded helmet will see a black void with dozens of tiny mouths bearing sharp gnashing teeth. Blood constantly drips from cracks in the armor.

This avatar can only be summoned on the new moon and the darkest nights. To those who unknowingly summon this avatar, the Aku-Shin Kage manifests in invisible form, blending into the surrounding shadows and stalking his new victim. Reading *Rock Garden on Infinity, Seki-to ni Mugen*, is said to summon the avatar of Nyarlathotep in this way. (See page 129.)

Dark Warlord/Ghost of Oda Nobunaga (Human Form)

In addition to the horrid mask of the Aku-Shin Kage, Nyarlathotep's Japanese avatar can appear as a charismatic Japanese man of commanding presence called the Dark Warlord, who in ages past influenced affairs amongst the religious orders and the military class. The Dark Warlord was responsible for much of the strife in the most turbulent periods of Japan's history. The visage the avatar takes is of a man known in ages past as Nobunaga Oda, a feudal warlord responsible for the bloody reunification of Japan in the Sengoku era. In the modern age, this human mask often sits in on the board room meetings in a business suit with Japanese captains of industry. His human form has the same statistics as found in the *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook under "Deities of the Mythos—Nyarlathotep," but when slain, he reverts to the monstrous form of the Aku-Shin Kage. This "ghost of Nobunaga" also stirs up trouble using ultra-right nationalists with the promise of a new golden age for imperial Japan.

CULT: The Aku-Shin Kage was worshiped by the Japanese before the twentieth century as a kami-sama of chaos and war. Worshipers hoped its summoned fury would be unleashed upon the enemy. Eventually it became known how unpredictable the being was so this practice declined. Now, it is worshiped by power mad modern cultists like Buddha's Tears and the Dugpa sect of degenerate Buddhists (the Green Caps), hoping to gain occult knowledge or to destroy a foe.

ARU-SHIN KAGE

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS: Like all of Nyarlathotep's forms, he can summon any servitor or member of an independent race at a cost of 1 magic point per POW the summoned creature possesses to do his bidding. More often than not, he will summon a native Japanese creature.

Pseudopod Attack: As the Aku-Shin Kage, he can either attack by extending two night-black pseudopod limbs once per round, or by swiping with his katana. The gnashing mouths on each pseudopod appendage strike down the unfaithful, while the shadowy pseudopods themselves have the effect of extreme cold, causing the flesh to become brittle and flake as when exposed to liquid nitrogen.

Corrosive Blood: The bright crimson blood, which continually flows from Aku-Shin Kage's armor, is corrosive to flesh and can be gathered by worshipers or flung as a ranged weapon.

AKU-SHIN KAGE, The Dark Warlord

STR 60	CON 40	SIZ 35	INT 86	POW 100
DEX 19	APP n/a	Move 15		HP 38

Av. Damage Bonus: +5D6.

Attacks: Pseudopod 75%, cold damage 1D8+db*
Bite 15%, damage 1D6*
Corrosive Blood 25%, 1d6 damage for 1d4 rounds*
Sword 100%, damage 1D10+db
*Not available in human form.

Armor: Human, none; Aku-Shin Kage, 4 points of oryōki armor

Spells: Nyarlathotep knows all Mythos spells. He can summon any monster at a cost of 1 magic point per POW of the creature. In Japan he can summon a tatsu, oni, shantak, hunting horror, or servitor of the Outer Gods for only 1 magic point. Another favorite is to induce creation of yōkai by infusing magic points into an area.

Sanity Loss: 0 to see the human form; 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to see the Aku-Shin Kage.

The Emerald Lama (Emerarudo Rama-sō), Avatar of Hastur

It is not what we choose to do, it is what is done out of necessity that dictates humankind's actions. Beware of the Shimmering Green One, my followers, for he is infinitely worse than Mara. He knows the weakness of the seeker, the hubris of the priesthood. He knows how to feed self importance, deluding the mind with the illusion of understanding. Follow not his path, for at the end you will find extinguishing of the soul, just not in the way you think.

—Lord Buddha on his deathbed to his followers.
The Forbidden Sutra

HISTORY: It is uncertain when this avatar first appeared but speculation is that he may have been existent as far back as Hyperborea, playing the role of tempter and advisor to generations of sorcerers, wizard priests, and devout cultists of mystery religions by cloaking himself in the dominant religion of the day. It is believed that this avatar contributed to the fall of several great civilizations including Mu, Lemuria and Atlantis. This avatar was worshiped on the Indian subcontinent as a Hindu deity. With Buddhism, the avatar took on the guise of a lama, an ascended master. The Emerald Lama is always surrounded by an entourage of faithful monks and priests acting as the secretive leaders of worldwide occult societies. Asia is the Lama's playground, though he has made jaunts to the West; the most documented instance was during World War II, when the Emerald Lama, called the Green Monk, advised Hitler's Thule Society. In Japan, this avatar uses the being known as the Black Monk to run its machinations. The Lama's followers use the *The Forbidden Sutra* to pervert Buddhism and control esoteric groups.

The Emerald Lama is called *'Gong Po* in Tibetan (' is part of the phrase)—an evil spirit/sorcerer symbolizing ego-clinging, wicked enticement, bewitching desire and craving. In Pāli/Sanskrit he is *Mahādiṭṭhi*, the Great Deceiver.

Obfuscated in layer upon layer of esoteric knowledge, the avatar rarely reveals itself to outsiders and never seeks victims. Instead, a seeker may spend a lifetime sifting through occult writings and secondhand accounts in an obsessive drive to understand the meaning of the Emerald Lama, the true meaning of the cosmos. A mysterious and tantalizing aura of "knowing" suffuses the air of anything mentioning or dealing with the Lama. Those of an intellectual or mystic bent are naturally drawn to this promise of empowerment, the fruit of knowledge. The most riveting work that puts an occultist on the path of the Lama is the Emerald Mandala. Used for meditation, it is an apparently simple geometric design and yet intricately complex. Each time a possessor of this image meditates upon it, the stronger the compulsion becomes to delve into deeper mysteries of the occult and discover the source of the Mandala.

The Emerald Lama is not ageless; his physical form can be destroyed. After 200 years he must take a new mortal shell. He is a reincarnating thought-form who consumes the soul of a Tibetan innocent while incarnating on Earth. The time between incarnations is the most vulnerable as his Dugpa followers search the countryside for the child who has the Mark of the Lama (a green birthmark on the forehead). At age eight, the transformation occurs.

The Emerald Lama exudes the aura of an enigmatic holy man clothed in shimmering tattered green robes. As the Lama walks, a wrinkled torso with parchment skin of a faint greenish hue is barely visible. The cloak's folds only reveal a passably human head and neck. Usually covered in a shadowy hood, its head, akin to a withered bald human's, is noticeably larger and egg shaped. Those looking into the shadows will see no nose or mouth, only glowing green pupil-less eyes. The only other feature is the third eye, a faceted emerald gem embedded in the forehead and about the size of a fist. If the robes are parted, where one would expect to see legs is instead empty space. Where hips should be is a torso that tapers off into three vestigial tentacles that hover three feet above the ground at all times. The Lama's arms are unseen until it attacks; where each human shoulder should be are two spindly appendages. At the end of each "arm" are five wiry knuckled tentacles/"fingers" with lamprey mouths on the "finger-tips."

It is no coincidence that the avatar's countenance has a close resemblance to "gray" aliens encountered over the last century. Through secret research by the Green Caps, countless people are subject to experimentation and essence drain by the avatar. The Dugpas are attempting to trigger the Jungian collective unconscious to adopt a new religious model for the new millennium with the Emerald Lama at its center as god.

CULT: Shamballah, known to the outside world as a place of ascended masters, was established in waves by wizard priests and sorcerers fleeing Lemuria, Atlantis, and Mu, with K'n-yan peoples settling in the underground tunnels beneath the community along with denizens of Yaddith. This quasi-mythical place exists simultaneously in Tibet, the Dreamlands and on the burned remnants of the tengu home planet on the ruins of a civilization scattered across the cosmos for 100,000 years. The tengu, sworn enemies of the Lama and his agents, will never again look upon their shattered homeworld as they are magically barred from ever entering Shamballah. This enigmatic place is better known in Asia by the name the *Golden Triangle*, from which large quantities of opium are grown and exported worldwide.

EMERALD LAMA

Most of the world's supply of Liao, the Plutonian Drug, also comes from the Shamballah valley where vast fields of black lotus are grown and harvested. Liao is the root of much trade between Shamballah and the Plateau of Leng which is easily accessible via tunnels and secret passes. The Tcho-Tcho, barely tolerated by the Shamballah community, act as traders, but they do serve to save the inhabitants the inconvenience of traveling into the outside world. These Tcho-Tchos are often mistaken as members of Tibetan Sherpa peoples by travelers in the Himalayan region.

Tantric Corrupter of Enlightenment: The Emerald Lama seeks to engage the intellectual weakness of researchers and mystics. Seekers of knowledge who fall into the trap waste away in meditation lusting upon the very idea of enlightenment, lost in the illusionary joy of achievement. They become living mummies, each one a living brain trapped in a desiccated shell for eternity. An early symptom is increasingly irrational thirst for Mythos knowledge to the exclusion of all else. Mara tempts with sensual pleasure; the Lama presents a much subtler trap, the entrancement of knowledge. The seeker becomes enamored with mystic powers and abilities gained through Tantric blood rituals and obsessed by the raw power of Mythos secrets. This encourages the attachment to desire and an unquenchable appetite for knowledge: man's first and most potent desire (and greatest weakness); a failure of every Buddhist tenet.

What purpose does this serve? If too many humans become enlightened and are able to understand the true nature of the cosmos, redefining what is "sane," then humanity might eventually become functional in a Mythos world rather than pawns of the Great Old Ones. Surface humans might still fulfill their greatest potential despite meddling by the mi-go. They might even surpass the feats of the K'n-Yan. This cannot be allowed.

The Emerald Mandala: The Emerald Mandala creates an unconscious hunger for knowledge and enlightenment. Found in copies of select esoteric texts, meditating on its geometric configurations opens the path to madness and cold inhuman enlightenment. (Roll the character's INT x4 or less every time it is meditated upon. A failed roll creates compulsion to meditate upon the Mandala. If failed three times, the victim gains 1 point of Cthulhu Mythos and the desire to further research the mystery of the Mandala. Repeat the cycle. In the person's dreams and meditations, the hovering form of the Lama appears to guide him to *The Forbidden Sutra* and Shamballah.)

Mythos Tomes Dealing with the Emerald Lama: There are numerous artifacts in the world bearing this being's taint. *The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears*, a modern cult inspired by the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus, is a slim pamphlet that summons the Emerald Lama by a chanted mantra. *The Mysterious Path*, a tribal book by the avatar's acolyte the Black Monk, also preaches the glories of the Emerald Lama but the tome most tainted and twisted from its original author's intent is *The Forbidden Sutra*, which is the canon of the Duggpa.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

The Shimmering Robes: The avatar's robes are a part of its physical body. Existing on three planes, it acts as a portal to Shamballah, the Dreamlands, Tibet and the ruined tengu planet as well the interstitial space between (Nirvana, more often called Azathoth's Insane Court). Those attacked by the robe are engulfed in shimmering blackness to appear at one of these locations.

The Third Eye: Through the organic gem on its head, a three dimensional scene forms in a green mist. Players of witnesses must roll INT x5 or less each round to resist watching; failure means the characters are mesmerized. Victims become obsessed with the place or thing shown. The target is helpless against the Embrace of the Lama. The misty scenes depict the true nature of Nirvana, Azathoth dancing with his court, the dying moments of the Buddha, the flight of the tengu from their dying world, visions of Shamballah, Mystic Hali, Carcosa and others. Some scenes, such as Azathoth, may induce Sanity checks; Sanity losses are 10% of normal (i.e. 1/1D10 SAN to see Azathoth in the Lama's third eye).

The Embrace of the Lama: This attack is devastating, doubly so for Buddhists as they believe death by the Lama extinguishes the reincarnating soul of the victim. Using one of its four "arms," with a reach up to 10 feet, the Lama will attempt to attach all five lamprey mouths of one "arm" onto a victim's skull or spine, sucking 1D8 POW and 1D8 CON per round, devouring the victim's soul and spinal fluid in the process. The knuckled tentacles can be pulled away with a STR of 10 or greater, but all must be removed; draining continues until all contact is broken. The avatar can attack four people per round in this way. All memories of the victim are accessible by the Lama. Survivors of this attack are forever changed. POW and CON return at a rate of 1 per week but the victim seeks to gain 1 Mythos point for every POW point lost. So great is the thirst for knowledge, the survivor's life is consumed and only by reaching a balance of lost POW to Mythos knowledge does he or she find peace but then gain a compulsion to seek out the Lama.

EMERALD LAMA, Infector of the Mind

STR 20	CON 50	SIZ 14	INT 80	POW 35
DEX 25	Move 15 hovering, or at will			HP 32

Weapons: Shimmering robes 85%, damage special*
Embrace 55%, damage special#
Third Eye 75%, damage special%

**Shimmering Robes—Instant random transport to new realm, damage may be incurred from the vacuum of space or mile high fall.*

#Embrace—All five lamprey mouths of a knuckled tentacle arm attach for 1D8 CON & 1D8 POW loss per round. Four simultaneous attacks per round possible (one from each arm). Zero CON or POW is death. Soul is lost, no reincarnation possible.

%Third Eye—target must make INT x5 check or be mesmerized.

Armor: none.

Spells: All Call, Contact, and Summon/Bind Spells, as well as others the keeper desires.

Sanity Loss: In cloaked priest form, no cost; any other mode 1D3/1D10 Sanity to see the Emerald Lama.

MAPPO NO Ryûjin (MAH-POH NO REYOU-GIN), Great Old One

Other Aliases: Mappo Dragon, Mother of Yig, Apophis/Apep (Egyptian), Azhi Dahaki (Persian), Bida (West African), Illuyankas (Hittite), Kukulkan (Mayan), Leviathan (Christian), Nidhogg (Norse), Quetzalcoatl (Aztec), Ryûjin (Japan), Tiamat (Babylonian), Tien Lung (Chinese), Typhon (Greek), Uroboros, Vitra (Vedic), Yam-Nahar (Canaanite), Zu (Sumerian)

The rain chilled me to the bone as I hid on my perch and watched the cultists on the reef below chant in a strange tongue. Just what were they doing? A particularly close lightning strike gave me cause to look up and it was then that my blood froze. Weaving through the pregnant storm clouds was a ghostly form. What rattled me most was the serpentine shape burrowing through the black clouds. I could discern no beginning or end to it. It was so inconceivable in size. Could it be a mile in length? As I tried to place the overall form, I glimpsed a head much like charcoal dragons on silk prints. But then another lightning strike as bright as day illuminated the body of the beast and I let out a involuntary scream: what I mistook for feathery hair on the body, . . could only be the writhing of human bodies engulfed in corpulent white maker. I was revealed to the cultists and as the madmen struggled to reach me, I could only think of the apparition. It would forever be burned into my memory, for what creature of Mother Nature could this abomination be?

—Lafcadio Hearn, *Supernaturalist Japonica.*

Coiled around the deepest bowels of the ruins of the last Muvian settlement slumbers the harbinger of a new age, the herald of Mappo. Known in Japanese myth as Ryûjin, she hovers on the edge of the collective consciousness of the human race in numerous myths throughout the world, crawling from the darkest bowels of the earth to devour the sun and plunge the world into the endless chaos of void.

All cultures have dim memories of her last visitation upon the earth 50,000 years ago. Egyptians called her Apophis, devourer of the sun. The Persians consider her Azhi Dahaki, eater of divine light. She is the feathered serpent Quetzalcoatl in Aztec lore; Nidhogg, who gnaws at the roots of Yggdrasil the world tree; the horror Typhon in Greek myth; Leviathan of Revelation 16:3; the celestial dragon of China, Tien Lung; and Zu, the Sumerian dragon who stole the Tablets of the Law. This Great Old One is the millennial dragon, Uroboros, the symbol of a circular snake eating its own tail.

When the age of man is complete on this earth, a great solar eclipse will occur, planets aligning for the first time in 6,000 years; rivers will run backwards; great earthquakes and tidal waves will batter the continents as the sixth race steps forward to rule the earth. The Mother of Yig will trumpet the new age in an orgy of destruction, devouring the sun and making day as night for 666 days. For the new age, there must be a cleansing of the old and the Ryûjin fulfills this role. In recent years, creative and psychic Japanese have had disturbing dreams of the Great Dragon. The dream always seems the same: the Ryûjin flies through the sleek skyscrapers of Tokyo accompanied by chanting. The behemoth is over a thousand feet in length, its milky white skin is covered by six hundred and sixty-six pseudopods that appear to be scales or fur from a distance. Each pseudopod looks like a massive albino anaconda attached at the tail to the main body of the Great Old One. Each thick pseudopod is large enough to easily contain a human victim. Sporting the desiccated head of an oriental dragon skull with horns, the beast has two skeletal wings that sprout a third of the way down the main body.

HISTORY: During the final cataclysm of Mu, an insane cult trying to merge the human and serpent races in a magical experiment (the so-called Great Experiment) unleashed the Mappo Dragon. In their corruption, they fell to worshiping Ghatanothoa and with that being's magics tried to become gods themselves. It was a great affront to Yig that his serpent children were trying to meld with humans into a new hybrid race through genetic experimentation. Loyal followers of Yig were instructed to enter prepared caverns and chambers, now the sunken ruins of Yonaguni off Okinawa, where they entered magical hibernation and waited to awaken and once again claim the earth as their own. The serpent race was already rapidly dwindling; the rotten fruit had to be pruned from the tree. For their folly, Yig unleashed the Great Dragon, and the Mother of Yig hewed a path of chaos and destruction, sinking most of the great kingdom of Mu and parts of Lemuria in the same night. The dying sacrifice of the greatest Muvian wizard priests kept the Gates to the Six Realms closed, preventing all the worlds from merging and bringing forth Mappo.

Keeping the ophidian terror bound and slumbering is an eight-pointed Elder Sign etched into the stone floor of the main temple complex in the Muvian ruins. The Elder Sign is further fortified with eight egg-shaped gyoku crafted from black jade. The gyoku are fitted into depressions at each point of the star shaped sign and are invested with 50 POW each. The eighth depression is empty; the eighth gyoku which fits into it is one of the three Imperial Regalia of Japan. (The missing seventh gyoku was recently re-inserted by Clark Sharpley; see "The Yonaguni Monuments," pages 10–24.) Removing these jade stones from their holes weakens the binding upon the Great Dragon of Mappo. If ever fully freed, the Ryûjin can initiate Mappo by devouring space-time itself, opening Gates to the lairs of all the slumbering Great Old Ones, negating the Elder Signs and wards and at the same time locking open Gates to Jigoku and Tengoku. The influx of these powerful beings would raze the Earth of any human traces.

The Mappo no Ryûjin is thankfully semi-corporeal in its present state, but if it is ever fully awakened, it will fully manifest on the physical plane, for in its physical form it is a true horror to behold. When the spell Contact Deity/Ryûjin is performed, the Great Old One can project its semi-corporeal form to the summoner's location. Only Call Ryûjin can cause physical manifestation and thankfully, that spell is lost to history.

There seems to be some connection between the serpent people, Yig and this behemoth Ryûjin. After millennia in hibernation the serpent race is beginning to awaken. Followers of the Dragon Lords plan for the expected awakening of The Great Dragon of Mappo in the near future. Possibly the group over-soul of the serpent race, this obscure Great Old One in Asian myth is said to have birthed Yig and all serpents that now exist upon the Earth. Some myths even state The Great Dragon gave birth to the race of tatsu.

CULT: In Japan, the native Shinto religion bears many serpent aspects in its worship and there are countless dragon cults throughout the world. The Dragon Lords secret society worships this being in conjunction with the Great Old One Yig as catalysts for what members believe will be a new golden age of Japan. Through spells and rituals over the last hundred years, the cult is slowly making progress to help the Mappo Dragon fully awaken and manifest in this world. Success would spell the end of mankind's reign on Earth.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

Essence Drain (Semi-Corporeal Form): In its partially awakened form, the Mappo Dragon attacks by passing its ghostly serpentine form through a structure or living being. It usually takes several slow sweeping passes to complete its work. If an inanimate object is attacked, it suffers 1D4 HP of damage a round. It will show signs of decay and rot

or rust away. A building will collapse; a car will fall into a pile of rust; a statue will crumble to dust. Living things begin to age at an accelerated pace and lose POW at a rate of 1D4 a round. If drained to 0 POW, the person quickly becomes a decomposing corpse.

Pseudopod Attack (Physical Form): As it slowly meanders through the sky, the monster can shoot out small clusters of its snake-like pseudopods curled around each other like a twine rope. It uses this attack to destroy structures on the ground and consume living creatures. However, this attack is limited to a distance of 200 yards from the main body of the creature. For a small party of people such as investigators, it can only extend three such pseudopods to attack such a small area. The pseudopods are covered with a slimy mucoidal substance with weak digestive acids. (Victims who survive the initial attack suffer 1 point of damage a round for 1D4 rounds as the acids burn the skin.)

Engulf (Physical Form): If a pseudopod strike does more than 50% of a victim's HP in damage, then the Ryûjin can try to engulf its target on the second round. The snakehead on the end of the pseudopod opens its mouth and "swallows" the target. This process is slow and takes two more rounds after the initial attack to complete as the "snake body" bulges to accommodate its meal. Physical attacks do normal damage but damage is divided among the victim and the pseudopod equally. (A combined STR of 20 is required to free the victim before it is too late.)

At the end of the third round the pseudopod connects to the main body where the person's body can be seen writhing inside the milky tube of the pseudo-snake body, possibly one of hundreds absorbed in such a way on its skin. The dragon absorbs 1 POW a round until the victim is drained, whereupon the human victim dissolves and is absorbed.

MAPPO NO RYÛJIN, Harbinger of Doom, Mother of all Snakes

Main Body:

STR 100	CON 48	SIZ 190	INT 12	POW 30
DEX 10	Move 8 flying			HP 119

Av. Damage Bonus: +17D6.

Pseudopod:

STR 20	CON 10	SIZ 15	DEX 15	HP 13

Move 12

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: Semi-corporeal—Essence drain 65%, 1D4 POW per round (1D4 HP damage per round to inanimate objects)

Physical—Pseudopod 65%, damage 4D6+db plus acid, damage 1 HP per round for 1D4 rounds

Engulf 50%, damage 1 POW per round

Armor: Semi-corporeal—none; Physical—2-points of mucoidal slime.

Spells: The Mappo Dragon knows all Mythos spells and grants them to worshipers as it sees fit.

Sanity Loss: Semi-corporeal form—1D3/1D20 SAN to see the Ryûjin.

Physical—1D10/1D100 SAN.

Mara, Avatar of Yog-Sothoth

After a lifetime of searching for cosmic harmony, I had finally found the key to the universe. As I sat in my meditation and chanted the sutra, I felt my body shifting into another reality. But my anticipated progress halted as a strangely passive looking creature barred my passage. By the way he floated in a seated yogi posture, I could clearly tell it was The Dweller on the Threshold, a being that all questing souls must confront. The Indian sunken features of his ebony face gave him a disturbingly serene look. Peaceful, that is, until I tried to pass. To my shock, the head twisted and a new face, dripping with malice, rotated in view. Upon looking closer, I could see he had in fact four faces facing in the cardinal directions! This alone shook my confidence. But when the grinning Mara began to whisper my most hidden, darkest desires with the promise of fulfillment, I knew my fate was sealed.

— Shintaro Ikeda, *Rock Garden on Infinity*

Mara may seem a mocking mirror of the enlightened one, the Buddha. However, Mara is an ancient entity who confronts all delving into mysteries of the universe, both within and without. As the Dweller on the Threshold, Mara is both the key and gate, Yog-sothoth. As an avatar of this Outer God, Mara acts to repel seekers of cosmic secrets who stumble into the interstices between dimensions where Yog-sothoth dwells. But Mara has rules to his own game and if a seeker is able to endure Mara's chosen test, be it riddle, inner temptation, or integrity, the visitor is allowed to proceed into deeper mysteries unscathed. Over the ages, Mara has taken many titles in many cultures and is one of the first challenges to the mettle of any sorcerer serious about magic. It is Mara's role as the Dweller on the Threshold that keeps humans from delving into the esoteric mysteries they should not by rights know. His special attention policing Earth prevents penetration of universal truths and has created a pocket of reality that's an exception to the normal "rule" within the universe.

Functioning in his three-fold role of guide, guardian and tempter, Mara appears either physically or telepathically to a target. Upon arrival, Mara has full possession of all of the contacted person's greatest fears, hopes and darkest secrets. He uses this knowledge to turn the person away from investigations into the unknown by corrupting the individual and driving them insane.

Mara manifests as an emaciated Brahman with ebony skin clad only in a linen loincloth, legs crossed in yogic meditation style. His most unsettling feature is his head, bearing four countenances, each facing in one of the four directions, shuttling to the onlooker when Mara experiences a different emotion. The faces convey fear, rage, guile, and greed. Each face is a gross caricature of the emotion. Through telepathic contact, Mara invokes the displayed emotion in onlookers and thus confuses and distracts them from their goals. It is possible to invoke Mara on the Earth Realm through Mythos works such as *The Forbidden Sutra, Kinki Kyôten* in native Japanese, as well as works derivative of this ancient tome.

ATTACKS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS: The Dweller on the Threshold is not a being of direct physical confrontation; but rather his arena is one of the mind. Mara, after a contest of wills (using POW), is able to contact the psyche of a victim at the cost of 1 magic point per scene. Once in Mara's grip, all illusions and mental constructions appear very real to the target. To suffer death in Mara's realm means death from fright in the material realm. Mara will also

MAPPO NO RYÛJIN

try to tempt his victim by tapping into the person's deepest most hidden desires and making them manifest.

If the person succumbs (contest of INT or POW on the Resistance Table), they lose 1D10 Sanity and possibly become corrupt as they gain 1D10 Cthulhu Mythos knowledge. If a person willingly succumbs without resistance, he is transformed or instantly reincarnated into a servitor of Mara, either a disgusting oni or an evil onryō spirit. Mara can be slain, but not permanently. By defeating Mara, a person is able to further his original research, having resisted the temptation placed in his path, and discover the deepest truths of the universe unhindered like the sorcerer Eibon.

CULT: First worshiped as a Hindu deity in ancient India, the emergence of Buddhism allowed the spread of Mara's influence. Today, he is known to Japanese Buddhists as an enemy of enlightenment and an obstacle to overcome, though pockets of corrupt cultists still worship him.

MARA, The Dweller on the Threshold

STR 10	CON 10	SIZ 10	INT 50	POW 25
DEX 15	APP 05	Move 15 hovering		HP 10

Damage Bonus: none.

Armor: none.

Weapons: Mental attack 65%, damage 0, but illusionary images can cause physical trauma; 10% of damage is real
Temptation (INT vs. INT or POW vs. POW on Resistance Table), damage 1D10 SAN loss and +1D10 Cthulhu Mythos percentiles

Spells: Mara often uses Mythos spells with mental and travel effects.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see Mara's face change. Possibly more if attacked mentally by Mara.

Further Mythos Influences

GAZIRA (GAH-ZEE-RAH), UNIQUE GREATER INDEPENDENT

Anglicized to "Gadzilla" in the West, little is known of the real, non-movie monster other than that it became active in the Pacific after the nuclear bomb tests of the 1950s. Most believe this creature to be the creation of the popular media; the horrible truth is that this behemoth actually walks the earth, but that the Japanese government keeps its existence and activities secret. It may be that Gazira is the embarrassing consequence of a failed military experiment, thus explaining the lengthy cover-up.

Gazira wakes from his hibernation because of strong seismic activity or exposure to nuclear radiation. Considering the monster's mutated state, there may be some connection to the Outer God Yidhra. Common modern catalysts for waking the creature include nuclear power plant leaks or underground testing. Brave but not particularly bright, it goes on an orgy of destruction and then returns to its resting place after many ineffectual attacks by the Self Defense Forces (SDF), Japan's military. Media reports make the devastation seem to be the result of an earthquake or typhoon. The local people are expected to keep their silence when generous relief is paid.

Because of some strange territorial instinct, if Gazira encounters a creature of size similar to itself, it will battle the interloper and try to drive it from Japan. It has done this to several Great Old Ones in ages past, but not without taking great wounds in the process.

Special Attack: Breathe Radioactive Fire. By expending 1 magic point, the spines on the monster's back glow and it can exhale a column of cleansing flame. This radioactive blast incinerates anything in its path, melting metal and stripping the flesh from unlucky victims. Those who survive this attack suffer radiation poisoning, losing characteristic points at a rate of 1D6 per month. Little can be done by modern medicine to cure this painful fate except to ease the patients' suffering.

GAZIRA, smasher of cities

STR 50	CON 50	SIZ 90	INT 06	POW 15
DEX 15	MOV 08	HP 70		

Damage bonus: +8D6.

Weapons: Stomp 90%, damage 3D6+8D6
Breathe Radioactive Fire 60%, damage 8D6, range 1000 yards
Hand Grasp 45%, damage 1D6+8D6

Armor: 15-point scales. Bullets will not penetrate his hide, but missiles are effective.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D10 Sanity points to see Gazira's towering form.

Other Entities in Japan

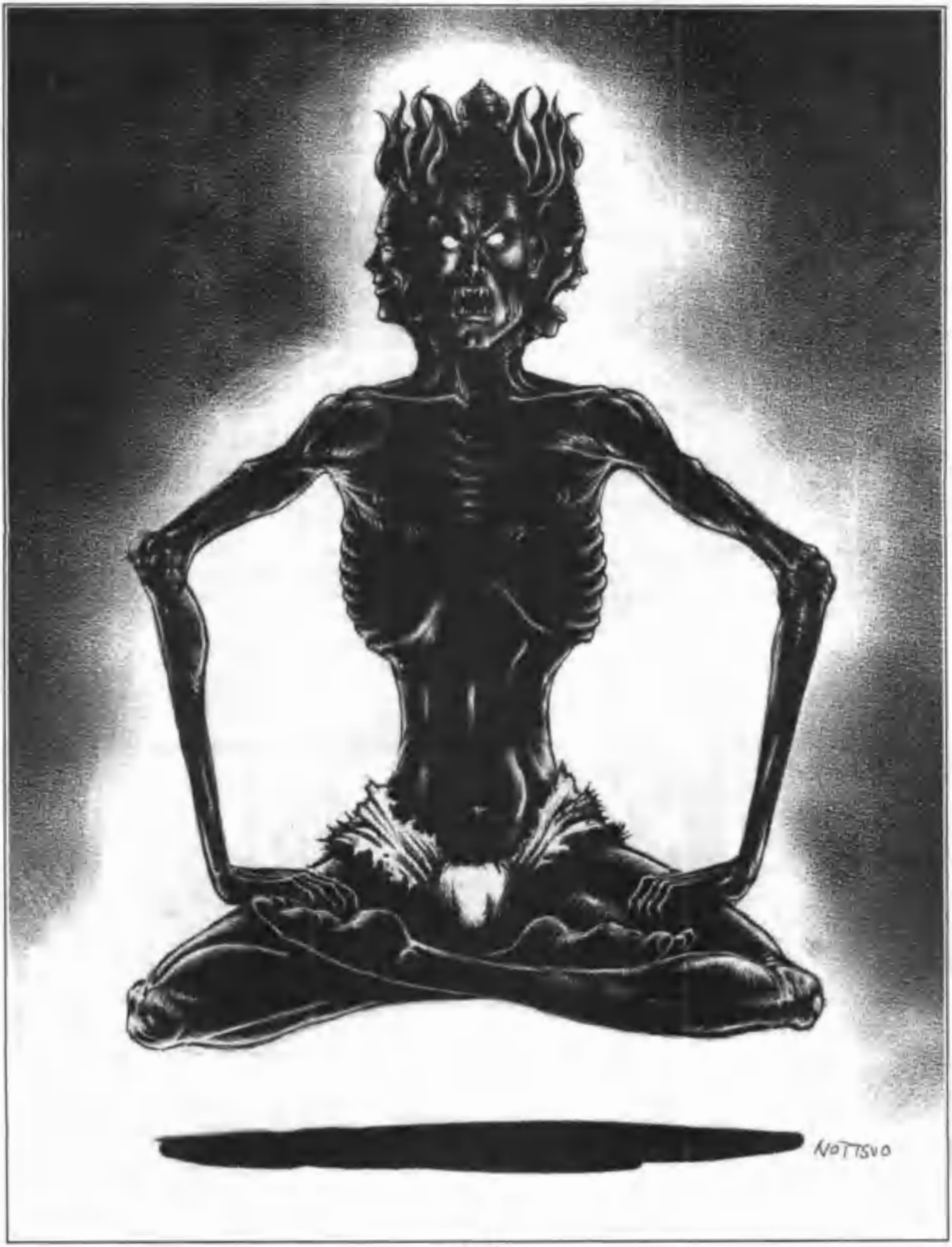
Azathoth: The influence of Azathoth is thankfully not often felt in Japan though bits of raw seething chaos occasionally do seep through reality to spontaneously form yōkai along Dragon Lines.

Chorazin: The cult Buddha's Tears have devised a video tape of tentacle anime which, when played 108 times, causes Chorazin to manifest through the television set and attack the victim. They plan to mass distribute this new tool to spur Mappo in the coming year. Other plans by the cult include introducing this same ritual item in digital format to spread via the Internet.

Chthonians/Shudde M'ell: A large number of chthonians cavort deep below the Japanese islands. They are attracted by the frictions of three continental plates which form a great "Y" beneath the archipelago. It is as much the chthonians as the plates grinding that contribute to the frequent earthquakes in Japan. Some modern prophets predict that Japan will sink below the waves due to this massive junction of plates; one wonders if the chthonians might not be the catalyst. The oni are said to pray to Shudde' M'ell and frequently attract this Great Old One into the vicinity of island nations.

Cthylla: This Great Old One, daughter of Cthulhu, is prophesied to replace him when he is foretold to die. These are the origins of the Buddhist belief in the arrival of Maitreya (Miroku), the next Buddha to physically manifest on the Earth. Cthylla will rule in the New Age, not a Buddha.

Cthulhu: While the great Cthulhu does not have any active agents in Japan, he hardly needs any; the proximity of the archipelago to R'lyeh means that since Japan's beginnings, the Japanese felt the slumbering dreams of this Great Old One. Cthulhu's dreams have subtly shaped Japan's lifestyle and aspirations. It is of note that the modern anime and manga realm have a popular tentacle horror series about *Dai-Tiern*, "Great Tu-lu," that many otaku (hard core fans) consider a cult hit. Tulu's resemblance to Cthulhu is remarkable. The "cute-culture" of modern fad-conscious Japan has also seen many



MARA

plush toy likenesses of Cthulhu on the market. A lasting cultural icon by the Nirio company is the "Hello Kthulhu" line of cute dolls in clashing pink and green. Nirio Co. is prolific, selling everything from Hello Kthulhu miler seat covers and Hello Kthulhu waffle makers to Hello Kthulhu talking keychains. Keepers might opt to make a cuddly "super-deformed" Cthulhu a focus for the slumbering Great Old One's telepathic attacks on dreamers. Cute and creepy.

Hastur: Hastur influences Japan through his avatar the Emerald Lama and his servants, the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus, nicknamed the Green Caps.

Hydra: This Great Old One poses a hazard for those astrally projecting, such as the tengu and astral serpents.

Kthanid: There is some speculation that, due to the similarities between the Elder God's abode and the Jade Emperor's, they may be one and the same being. Then again, there is another theory that the leader of the K'n-yan is in fact the Jade Emperor due to their mastery of immortality.

Lloigor: In ages past, this alien race was often mistaken for ryuu, native dragons of Asia.

Lloigor & Zhar: This Great Old One and its twin Zhar are worshiped by the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus. It is rumored that there is a third being identical to its brothers located in the wastes of Hokkaido.

Tick Tock Man: This avatar of Nyarlathotep has manifested within the halls of Yotsubishi's Psi-Mech Division encouraging scientists there to advance cybertech and bio-tech to elevate humankind into a new species. The form it takes in Psi-Mech's labs in Tokyo is a high-tech trinary quantum computer that the scientists believe is the world's first AI (artificial intelligence). Bio-borg Hachi-Rei is the first fruit of this experimentation. The Tick Tock Man has also been reported in the confines of *Mega-Tokyo* in the Dreamlands (to be detailed in a future book).

Tsathoggua: Over the centuries, this Great Old One has been mistakenly characterized into the harmless statue of the fat Laughing Buddha. However, Tsathoggua has found that it can influence long term owners of such statues much like it can with true idols of its likeness. Who's laughing now?

Y'golonac: Due to the repressed desires of modern Japanese people, namely frustrated salarymen, this Great Old One has made inroads into Japanese society. Japanese manga have been one of the strongest contributors to this as he encourages corrupted individuals to create and distribute yet more twisted comics. Once they have done so, Y'golonac devours them. Members of Buddha's Tears also actively worship Y'golonac.

Yig: The influence of the Father of Serpents is strong in Asia, particularly Japan. Yig inadvertently influenced the serpent symbolism within the Shinto religion. He is worshiped by the Dragon Lords, and his "mother" Mappo no Ryûjin slumbers in Okinawa.

Yog-Sothoth: Mara, his avatar, is this Outer God's influence in Asia. The avatar strives to keep seekers of enlightenment within the boundaries of space-time. Violators are severely punished. ☯

Cthulhu Sushi: Who's scarier? by Jason Chan

GAZIRA (SEE PAGE 258)

Scroll Five: Scenarios and Sinister Seeds

A Mythos altercation disrupts a sumo match.

SECTION ONE:

STARTER SCENARIOS

Introductory adventures for campaigns in the land of the rising sun.

The Hin-no-Maru Slayings

An outsider from the Land of the Eagle will disturb the Great Dragon. Displeased, it will awaken angry and all will tremble. Only the Children of Amaterasu and the Children of the Serpent can lull its bulk back to slumber. This event marks the beginning of the time of darkness.

—The Shinwa Taizen.

"The Hin-no-Maru Slayings" is ideal for beginning players and those new to the *Cthulhu Japan* setting. Two or more investigators are recommended. Large groups, however, may hinder interviews with witnesses. This scenario can be played in a single night if so desired.

The outcome of the scenario isn't reliant upon the composition of foreign or Japanese investigators in the group of investigators, but the nationality of the investigators may affect interactions with the police and interviews with witnesses. For foreign investigators, the Japanese language may present an obstacle to overcome. However, foreigners carry an advantage of being outsiders; people may be more willing to talk to them about topics that might otherwise be off limits if they were fellow Japanese citizens.

"The Hin-no-Maru Slayings" takes place in 2002, but it can be run in 1890s and 1920s Japan without too much alteration as the main antagonist predates both those eras. Adjustments would involve the political and police institutions of the era as well as the occupations of the witnesses.

Seasons are important to Japanese sensibilities. The scenario takes place in the summer in the concrete corridors of the largest city in Japan, Tokyo. With little or no breeze, the humidity is sweltering and the heat suffocating. The thrill drone of seasonal cicadas is deafening in the parks. The annual O-Bon Season, for remembrance of dead kin, is in full swing and all forms of transportation are over-booked, with long lines of people waiting to leave the city. The roads and trains too are hopelessly gridlocked. Unless plans were made months in advance, there is no way in or out of the city.

No Mythos tomes are introduced in this scenario, but unique Japanese Mythos entanglements are, and the world of the supernatural is entered for a time.

There are no maps for this scenario. If the keeper so desires, generating a street map will enhance roleplaying the game of cat and mouse in the back alleys of Tokyo. Several police reports and a dedication plaque can be photocopied as player handouts. (**Note:** Japanese names in handouts are presented Japanese style, with the family name first.)

For the keeper who wishes to lengthen the adventure, try increasing the number of murders; each encounter, the investigators get tantalizingly closer and closer to catching the killer in the act. Exploring the Japanese Yakuza/ultra-nationalist/political sub-cultures for clues and interviews can reveal a colorful and spicy side of Japan. Ultra-nationalism and the Dragon Lord connection to the murders is an excellent aspect to develop both during and after the scenario.

To shorten the scenario or make it more action oriented, place the investigators at the scene of the crime as it takes place.

Evidence gathered for this case will seem confounding and rife with dead ends using conventional police techniques. Thinking "out of the box," a pine box, will yield results. Political and Yakuza connections will aid tremendously.

Keeper Information

The scenario begins at night on the rainy streets in the urban sprawl of Tokyo. Around 2:00 A.M., the trains have stopped running and greedy taxi drivers milk travelers for triple fare. Droves of drunken salarymen stagger out of closing hostess bars and karaoke lands into normally safe back alleys, oblivious to the malignant evil that stalks the streets.

An onryō, an immensely powerful and extremely nasty entity, is possessing people to commit grisly murders and then abandoning its hosts like rag dolls. It continues its life work: as a samurai, he resisted Westernization of Japan and led the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877 against the Meiji government and was defeated by Meiji loyalists. Now awakened as a wrathful entity of pure hate, the onryō sees the current government of Japan as an affront. The political leaders of the Meiji Period were responsible for the push to modernize, to adopt Western

values and technology. The political leaders of the socialist democracy of modern Japan are just as guilty in the onryô's perspective.

Onryô are not ghosts or spirits, neither are they as powerful as kami; nevertheless, they are nearly unstoppable without magical aid. The only thing in the investigators' favor is that the onryô is "new" and has not figured out how to possess and inhabit a human long term. Killing the host does not stop the ethereal beast, but putting it to rest will.

Interaction with the Authorities: The keeper can take two approaches with the National Police Force. Either they are utterly helpful and defer to the investigators' "expertise" on serial killers or they perform a total media and information blackout. The police won't hinder the investigators' work but don't expect any help or information from official channels. Note that gun possession in Japan is illegal except for legal authorities (see pages 84–85 for more details).

Third Eye Agency: Ryoma Miyamoto is an ex-police inspector and partner in the Third Eye Agency, which investigates the paranormal. He will act as the investigators' contact for police reports and records if the keeper decides that the police are playing hardball.

Player Information

The following episodes lead into the investigation:

Episode One

The investigators are watching TV at a bar or ramen shop. A news flash about the bizarre murder of a Tokyo politician cuts into normal programming. The NHK news anchor cuts to a live scene: an annoyed Tokyo Police commissioner talking to a man who seems familiar (Ryoma Miyamoto). They are behind a police line looking at the body. After a minute, the two men push their way through a forrest of microphones jammed in their faces.

RYOMA MIYAMOTO

Episode Two

It's late and the investigators are walking the Tokyo streets, either to go to a meeting at a hostess bar or get some ramen noodles at an all night joint. A blood curdling scream echoes down a side street. If the investigators choose to investigate, they spend five minutes running through confusing switchback alleys. Meanwhile, horrifying squeals and strangled burbles continue but grow fainter. When they do find the source of the cries, it is too late. A white sheet lies on a twitching body. A perfect red stain of blood rapidly expands in the center of the cloth, in a perfect circle—a mockery of the Japanese flag. A pungent rotted stench fills the alleyway (decomposed flesh), but the body is obviously fresh.

The victim is in a pile of discarded ramen noodle boxes, dressed in an expensive three-piece suit, a cloisonné pin on his lapel. A successful Education roll will reveal the pin's crest to be that of the Tokyo city government.

If the investigators search the immediate streets, they find them deserted. Only a mumbling homeless man in a cardboard box can be found. He repeats the phrase "Remember Satsuma" over and over again until the investigators approach. After considerable coaxing, he will reveal his name only as Yugi-Chan and that he saw nothing and remembers nothing. A Spot Hidden or Luck roll will notice fresh hand prints of blood far in the back of his box home. Reporting this incident to the police is the right move. (It will also bring the investigators into the story.)

Episode Three

HIDEKI ITO

1. The investigators are contacted by Ryoma Miyamoto from the Third Eye Agency. He has a case and he needs some help: the agency is bogged down with another project in Kyoto. He will give the details of the case when the investigators come to his office tonight at 8:00 P.M.

2. The investigators receive a call from NPF Commissioner Ito. A delicate case full of explosive political and national issues needs attention by a neutral party that he can trust. He asks they exercise discretion if they take on the case.

HIDEKI ITO, Age 54, Commissioner, National Police Agency, Autonomous Tokyo NPF District

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 13	INT 15	POW 13
DEX 10	APP 11	EDU 17	SAN 70	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: 9mm Revolver 55%, damage 1D10
Telescopic Baton 65%, damage 1D4+1D4 or stun.

Armor: 8-point police issue Kevlar ballistic vest.

Skills: Bushidô 65%, Drive Patrol Car 45%, Credit Rating 45%, English 30%, Fast Talk 65%, Handgun 55%, Law 55%, Martial Arts (Kendô) 70%, Persuade 15%, Psychology 75%, Spot Hidden 50%, Urban Navigation 45%.

Equipment: 2-way walkie-talkie (9 mile range), 12 spare bullets, police ID badge, handcuffs, halogen flashlight, club, police commissioner's vehicle (Infinity I35 with bullerproof glass and steel reinforced panels), access to police database, handbook of ordinances and regulations, and navy blue uniform.

RYOMA MIYAMOTO, Age 46, Hard-Boiled Paranormal P.I.

STR 15	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 14	POW 15
DEX 14	APP 13	EDU 15	SAN 50	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: 9mm Revolver 60%, damage 1D10
Katana 85%, damage 1D10+1D4
Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3+1D4

Armor: 2 points of sewn-in kevlar mesh in gray trench coat.

Skills: Bargain 40%, Bushidô 58%, Cthulhu Mythos 03%, Credit Rating 70%, Cultural Etiquette 45%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 75%, Handgun 60%, Hide 40%, Martial Arts (Kendo/Iaido) 85%, Listen 45%, Occult 35%, Persuade 68%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Sneak 45%, Track 30%, Urban Navigation 65%, Zoku (Yakuza) 25%, Zoku (Bosoroku) 35%.

The Police Reports

Upon arrival, Ryoma or the commissioner will ask the investigators to look at the two police reports and examine the evidence. He would like them to come back tomorrow at the latest to give their opinions, conclusions, or just a fresh perspective on what they believe is going on before he will divulge anything more. (He would like a second opinion.)

The following are avenues of research available to the investigators as they look into the murders:

If the investigators dig through the political aspect of the case: Indications are that the deaths are politically motivated. Everything points to a serial killer amongst the ultra-nationalist movement, but constant surveillance of this high profile group indicates otherwise. A police contact, an informant, is listed in the reports: Tatsuro Kihara. If investigators dig deep enough, they will find the reason such a radical element would have affiliation with the police is because Tatsuro is the son of Shinjuku Ward's Chief Police Inspector Keiji Kihara. A family embarrassment, Tatsuro is a marginal source of information (he respects his father's profession), but this will not get investigators very far.

Something else should catch the player characters' eye in the investigation. A strange politically motivated incident of vandalism has been reported; a 10-foot-tall bronze statue was desecrated. The location is in Tokyo's infamous Roppongi Ward, the seedy night club and dance district. This is a lead they might consider looking into during their investigations. This is a lead they might consider looking into during their investigations.

Besides being politicians, all of the victims have one other thing in common. All have a small green tattoo on their wrist: a dragon with a crown. The dragon tattoo of the victims is a major clue. All belong to a "club" of sorts, an elite Todai (Tokyo University) "circle," the Dragon Political Debate Circle *(Ryu Seiji Kuraku)*. Like a fraternity, it is an esteemed group many of the highest ranking elected officials of the national and prefectural governments belong to. The keeper might choose to make a list of those members at immediate threat. One of

Hin-no-Maru Papers #1

Tokyo Metropolitan Police

Homicide Incident Report

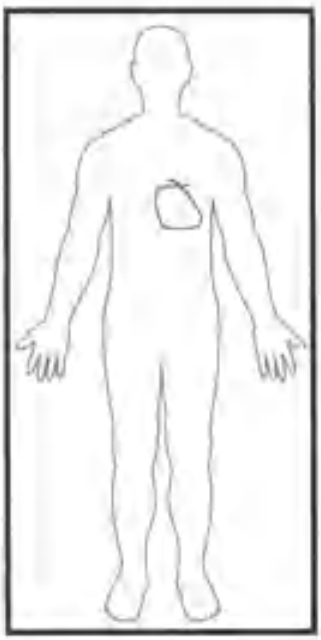
Reporting officer: Shinyama Kyosuke, TMP Badge# 312-78-63

Location: Service entrance of Neon Karaoke, Shinjuku Ward. Victim lying beneath emergency fire escape.

Time and date of arrival on scene: 08/12/2004, 12:03 A.M.

Identity of victim: LDP Vice Chair, Suzuki Kengo

Estimated time of death: 08/12/2004, 10:45 P.M.



Nature of death/type of wounds: Total removal of heart from thoracic cavity through tearing and ripping of flesh. Wound indicates heart exploded with great force from inside of body—force not possible by average adult, even with weapon. No metal fragments or other hardened materials found in wound. Heart not found.

Evidence found on scene: Silk sheet, 3' x 6', placed upon corpse. Victim's blood formed perfect circle stain upon sheet.

Suspects and witnesses: Drunken businessman by name of Abe Katsunori in vicinity. Detained for questioning but no indication of guilt or knowledge of crime detected.

Comments: Recommend DNA testing of wound.

the highest profile members is Mr. Yuya Sunatomo, the minister of finance (still living).

If the investigators look into the physical evidence: No evidence—hair samples, a weapon, DNA samples or even fingerprints—can be found at the crime scenes.

If the investigators look into the forensic reports (or have Medicine skill to examine the bodies themselves): In his reports, the grizzled forensics doctor half-jokes that if he didn't know better, he'd think the cause of death was paranormal—by fright. The heart was "scared" right out of the victims. The bizarre thing is, when a heart bursts, there should be a six foot fountain of blood; blood should splatter the entire crime scene. There is none; only the perfectly expanding circle of blood on the silk "flag" (which is itself peculiar).

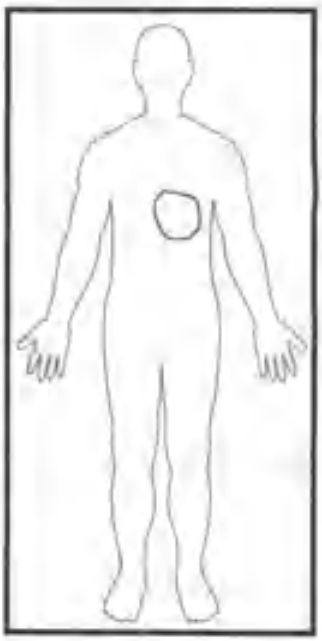
If the investigators look into the silk cloth: Testing on the silk indicates that the sub-species of worm that spun it no longer exists today. The last they were seen in Japan was at the end of the Tokugawa Period over two hundred years ago in Southern Kyushu.

After letting the investigators discuss the the two reports, in addition to the body they discovered, Ryoma or the commissioner will state his opinions on the case, which seem to more or less confirm the investigators' angle—that something odd is going on. In response,

Hin-no-Maru Papers #2

National Police Force

Department of Special Investigations



Reporting Inspector: Matsuda Tatsuro

Badge Number: NPF 1267-AH

Location: Room 459, Hotel Seiyô Ginza, Ginza Ward. Victim found naked in bed.

Time and Date of Arrival on Scene: 3:00 A.M., 08/04/2004

Identity of Victim if Known: Chiba City Mayor Yano Seiji

Estimated Time of Death: 2:34 A.M., 08/04/2004

Nature of Death/Type of Wounds: Heart removed from body through chest. Reports indicate, however, that victim died at least 10 minutes previous to violation of body.

Evidence Found on Scene: White silk sheet placed upon body, blood from wound formed peculiar perfect circular stain. Indications are sheet does not come from hotel inventory.

Suspects and Leads: The mayor's "guest" for the night, Hostess Chole Waterford, a New Zealand student on work study, was downstairs in the bar at the time of the murder. Witnesses state she went to the bathroom twice but otherwise corroborate her story.

Comments: This death should be kept under wraps for the time being until the killer can be found. Political backlash might be considerable.

Tokyo's political figures believed at risk are to be placed under heavy police guard.

On the Beat

The investigators may of course follow other leads. Inventiveness should certainly be rewarded by the keeper, but two main leads will net the most useful information.

Interviewing the Suspects/Witnesses

Seeking out the witnesses to the three murders—Katsunori Abe, Chole Waterford, and Yugi-chan—will offer some valuable insights. An Idea roll or a skillfully roleplayed interview will reveal all three share common peculiarities, both in their stories and behavior. None have any immediate connection to each other, nor do they know the victims. (One interesting twist is to make all the witnesses lineal descendants of the onryô, Saigo Takamori.)

They do not remember the events of the murder or the minutes following them, indicating memory loss or a blackout. Something understandable for Mr. Abe, but its doubtful the others are drunks. They all seem a bit glazed and detached even days after the incident, too long for normal shock. (The onryô maintains a weak link with them.) They also seem noticeably pale and weak. Their vital signs are all significantly depressed.

Hypnosis or Psychoanalysis will reveal they all dream of a shadowy figure in a blurry scene. They are smothered by the evil. If regressed or interviewed, they will burst out screaming and babbling in fear (and lose 1/1D6 Sanity).

See their stats at the end of the scenario.

Interviewing the UltraNationalist

Seeking out Tatsuro Kihara will find his present address to be in a parking lot of Shinjuku: A large lime green delivery van painted with the W.W. II Yamato rising sun flag on each side. A pair of four-direction public address horns bloom from the top of the truck. The windows are tinted dark to be one-way. Some young Yakuza punks in punch perms linger around a closed pachinko parlor across the street, watching the investigators but not taking any action. If the investigators knock on the sliding door, it will open and they will be greeted with a wild eyed man wearing pastel green overalls and a white hachimaki (headband) with the rising sun flag on it. A quick peek into the van will reveal he is producing posters with extremist slogans ("Repel the Barbarians! Japan First! Remember the Emperor! A Golden Age Again!") This interview may prove the most problematic for foreign investigators; Mr. Kihara will be outright hostile at first. Depending upon what the investigators reveal of the murders, they will get different responses from him and the nearby Yakuza thugs.

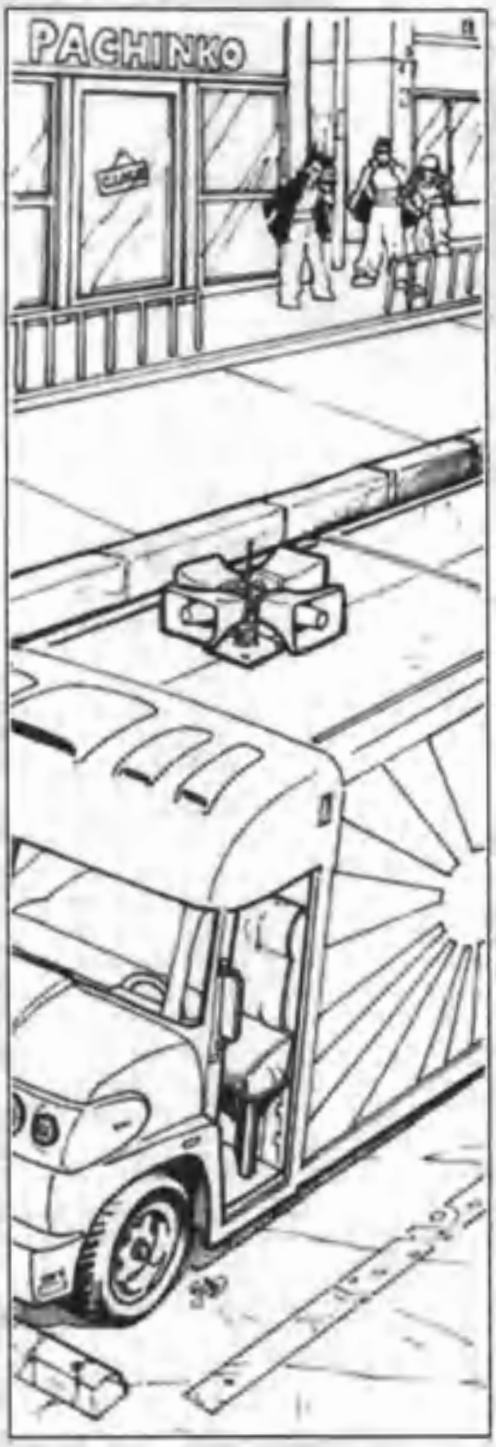
TATSURO KIHARA

If they ask about the political attitudes of his group, he will gladly go into his nationalistic fervor. He will conclude that it all started with the Satsuma Rebellion. They believed and fought for what his group does—that Japan should be for the Japanese. Western influences weaken the nation and its spirit.

If the investigators ask him his whereabouts during the murders, he gets defensive and starts shouting. The young Yakuza might wander over to see what the disturbance is.

If the player characters ask if there are any extreme groups within the ultranationalists he will again be defensive but say that assassinations and terrorist attacks went out of style two decades ago. They must win the hearts of the Japanese people, not kill her leaders. Again, the Yakuza come calling.

If the investigators reveal the murders and ask if he thinks there is any connection, he will at first be extremely pleased with the news—"Strike one for the cause!" But then he will get suspicious: are they



implicating him? He looks over to the Yakuza who wander over, pinning the investigators between the green van and their well armed group.

TATSURO KIHARA, Age 32, Leader of Political Extremist Group

STR 13	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 12	POW 12
DEX 12	APP 15	EDU 13	SAN 60	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: .22 Bolt-Action Rifle* 55%, damage 1D6+2
Wakizashi 85%, damage 1D8+1D4
Tanto 65%, damage 1D6+1D4
Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3+1D4
**The rifle has a homemade silencer (a successful Listen roll is required to hear it firing).*

Armor: 4-point leather jacket w/metal plates.

Skills: Bushidô 35%, Cultural Etiquette 10%, Drive Automobile 34%, Fast Talk 58%, Hide 50%, Jingoism 55%, Martial Arts (Iaido) 46%, Patronism 65%, Persuade 35%, Poor Hygiene 35%, Psychology 35%, Sneak 45%, Zoku (Yakuza) 85%.

YAKUZA PUNKS, Group of 2D4 , use these stats for all:

STR 15	CON 14	SIZ 11	INT 09	POW 08
DEX 15	APP 10	EDU 07	SAN 58	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Katana 75%, 1D10+1D4
Tanto 75%, 1D6+1D4

Armor: 2 point leather jacket.

Skills: Bushidô 18%, Conceal 75%, Fast Talk 68%, Hide 50%, Martial Arts (Iaido) 75%, Persuade 80%, Sneak 80%, Urban Navigation 35%, Weapon (Katana) 75%, Zoku (Yakuza) 55%.

Face to Face

While the investigators are en route to an interview with the witnesses of the ultra-rightist Mr. Kihara, they hear cries of distress. The same gurgling screams echo down the alleys. It is hoped the investigators will run to the source of the distress. The time is between 7:00 P.M. and 11:00 P.M.

A dash through the maze

The keeper should make two rolls. The first, 2D6, determines how many rounds the onryô will take with its victim. The second roll, 1D8, determines how many rounds it will take the investigators to reach the scene. Roleplay the run through the alleys round-by-round, but do not tell the players how long it will take beforehand. Screams and cries should accompany every round, becoming louder or fainter based on the turns the player characters take down the alleys. The investigators should tell the keeper the direction they run and what they are doing (like getting out a weapon or camera). The keeper might choose to make a simple grid street map beforehand in case they split up.

encounter ONE: the alley

The gurgling screams are not from the victim; rather they are from the 11-year-old girl the onryô has nearly totally possessed. A palatable malignance fills the alleyway and the air is thick with the stench of rotted corpses. (The keeper might require the investigators to make successful CON x5 checks or suffer from nausea.) Even the ambient light is noticeably dimmer around the girl.

The little school girl,Yukiko Mori, is dressed in a blue and white sailor suit dress, a standard junior high school uniform. Black braided pig tails sprout from each side of her head. A shadowy black demonic presence seven feet tall is superimposed over the girl. When it raises its hazy black limb, the slender arm of the girl rises as well. She has the politician, three times her size, held up in the air with a single hand. Her eyes glow red. (Keepers, use the onryô's physical stats for the girl.)

Once the investigators arrive, it will take 1D4 rounds for the onryô to finish possessing the girl and kill his victim, politician Shiro Kanzaki. The man stands unmoving, paralyzed like a frightened deer. Shouts will not rouse him as he is mentally held by the onryô. Tackling him or the onryô might snap him out of it, though.

If the investigators are unable to stop the murder, they will witness the girl release the man and watch his heart burst from his chest, sucked into the shadowy onryô. The onryô will then spit at the politician: a white ectoplasmic web will spew out and solidify. When it hits the man, it is a fine silk cloth. A glowing green aura, visible to all, solidifies around the politician. It takes on the form of a serpent person, making a silent scream and dissipating, the man slumping dead.

(The politician, like all the murder victims, is possessed by an astral serpent. Those in the Dragon Political Circle are all possessed by these entities. Their stats are not vital to the scenario but more info is available on pages 248–250.)

If the investigators are "lucky" enough to witness the onryô attack first hand, keepers should describe the scene and make them roll a Sanity check, 1D4/1D8+2.

Disturbing the murder ritual will cause the onryô possessing Yukiko to physically attack the investigators (and optionally invoke an essence drain attack). She then runs away when the opportunity presents itself. Note that she has the strength and warrior cunning of a full grown man. The investigators can pursue; if they capture her, the onryô will leave her body.

Encounter Two: the Subway

The chase leads into the subways for a claustrophobic close encounter and should be the last with the monster before the investigators piece together how to stop the onryô. After this, its next attack will be upon Prime Minister Keizo Yabuki. The keeper is of course free to add even more killings of lower ranked politicians between the final attack on the prime minister if players are having trouble piecing the clues together.

It's near midnight and the temperature is still almost 100 degrees. The streets are empty except for the occasional taxi horn in the distance. The investigators hear screams echoing up the stairs of a nearby subway entrance. The fluorescent lights of the three flights of steps and platform are flickering or altogether out. The entrance and platform are abandoned. As the investigators descend, screams continue to echo with direction difficult to determine. Just as the investigators reach the platform edge, an automated voice in Japanese announces a train arrival. This could be played up for a false scare. The car arrives 30 seconds later. The doors open to an empty subway car whose dimly lit interior provides the only real source of light on the platform. The keeper should tell the players that they see the glimpse of someone getting on the train at the far end of the platform (about 100 yards away). As the train doors begin to close, the keeper should give the investigators a chance to quickly board the empty car. If they do, the interior lights extinguish as the doors close. The next subway station is not for another nine minutes. This should give investigators enough time to walk through the eerie atmosphere of a train lit only by occasional tunnel service bulbs. Gurgling cries echo from the opposite end of the train.

When the investigators reach the opposite end of the train they find two figures: the onryô-possessed Police Commissioner Hideki Ito and a terrified LDP politician, Junro Matsumoto, holding his briefcase to ineffectually shield his face. The method of attack and possible

Sanity loss to witness the killing will unfold identically to the those described in "Encounter One: The Alley."

The Statue

When the investigators arrive at the scene of the desecrated statue, many pieces of the puzzle will fall together. A graffiti covered plaque will give a brief history lesson on the man the statue is dedicated to and perhaps reveal his motivations as an onryō. (See *Hin-no-Maru Papers #3*, this page.)

The fallen statue and its base are currently surrounded by construction zone sawhorses linked together by long strips of tape. On each sawhorse is a circular sign with the image of a hard hat-wearing worker bowing; below it is printed "PLEASE EXCUSE THE INCONVENIENCE" in kanji. The tape reads, "CONSTRUCTION AREA—DANGER—AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY!" However, there are no police or repair workers present when the investigators arrive, and it is easy enough to walk over or under the tape. No repair work has been done yet.

Evidence exists of long term offerings like rice and oranges being left here much like an ancestral grave. The current containers are smashed and damaged, scattered in the park.

The bronze statue is of a man in full samurai armor. The two ton statue has fallen from its perch to lie horizontally on the ground. It's not too badly damaged, but the arm is ripped off. The concrete base seems hollow. A Spot Hidden will yield a heavy lid seam that has been recently moved. If the investigators can bully the lid open, they will find human remains of great age. They are disturbed and possibly desecrated.

Desecrated Statue

(The disturbed remains are those of the onryō. Whoever attacked the grave/statue is up to the keeper. This is the disruption that awoke the wrathful spirit to murder in the streets.)

Putting it to Rest

Encourage the investigators to look into traditional Japanese ways of putting a restless spirit at peace. After some research (1D6 hours of interviews at shrines and temples as well as the public library) it is determined that a Shinto priest can perform a rite of placation and purification of the site and a Buddhist priest can perform a prayer chant to rebury the bones. The statue must also be raised aright and repaired. If the investigators can do this before nightfall, they will stop the murder of the minister of finance. If they still don't clue into this as a solution, the following night it will be the prime minister who dies. Reburying the remains is only a stopgap, however: once an onryō is formed it never dissipates. If the remains are ever disturbed again, the onryō is sure to rise. (Depending upon how many encounters with the onryō there are and how much of the ultranationalist-astral serpent connection the keeper wishes to play up, the adventure can be extended by diverting the investigators from getting to the statue.)

Optional next step: Close to home

A devious keeper might choose to have either a close friend of the investigators or even an investigator become possessed by the onryō for its grandest attack yet. Its next target in the investigator's body: Mr. Sumitomo.

Conclusion

If the investigators stop the murder of Keizo Yabuki, don't kill Yukiko, and put the onryō to rest, award them a 1D10+1 Sanity bonus. If they don't stop the next two murders of politicians (Encounter One and Encounter Two) but put the entity at peace, award them 1D6 Sanity points.

Solving this case will dispose Ryoma *and/or* the commissioner favorably toward the investigators. They will have, at the very least, a powerful favor to use at a later date. They could also use this gratitude

Hin-no-Maru Papers #3: The Dedication Plaque

Takamori Saigo (1828–77)

Hero of the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877

A brave larger-than-life samurai who belonged to the ancient and powerful Satsuma clan in Southern Kyushu, Takamori Saigo was partially responsible for restoring the emperor to power and forming the Meiji Government. Takamori grew restless with the direction of the government and organized a revolt with the Satsuma samurai. Armed with swords, he and his warriors fought valiantly and well but were no match for a premier army using Western tactics and Western firearms. Badly wounded, Takamori committed suicide in the samurai tradition rather than suffer the ignominy of capture. Despite the Satsuma Rebellion, Takamori's bravery and spirit, his contribution to the early government, and his support for the Meiji Emperor he later opposed, guarantee that he will not be forgotten. Takamori is revered today for his dedication to principle.

to build a working relationship with the Third Eye Agency or the National Police Force. If the investigators accidentally or intentionally kill Commissioner Ito they will have the wrath of the Japanese authorities nationwide descend upon them.

More tricky is how the investigators will explain the events to their benefactors. As part of a paranormal detective agency, Ryoma is more likely to believe a supernatural explanation.

The investigation into the circumstances surrounding the scenario need not end with putting the onryô to rest. The dying astral serpents and the dragon runoms are interesting leads that could draw the investigators into dealings with the Yakuza and the secret society of the Dragon Lords. The identity of the parties who set the onryô loose upon the politicians is also a mystery. Is it the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus? Buddha's Tears? Yotsubishi Psi-Mech? A free agent?

The Onryô-Possessed:

YUGI-CHAN, Shinjuku Homeless

STR 11	CON 10	SIZ 09	INT 09	POW 07
DEX 10	APP 06	EDU 08	SAN 45	HP 10

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

KATSUNORI ABE, Drunken Salaryman

STR 10	CON 15	SIZ 12	INT 13	POW 11
DEX 13	APP 13	EDU 18	SAN 65	HP 14

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

CHOLE WATERFORD, Bar Hostess

STR 08	CON 14	SIZ 11	INT 17	POW 15
DEX 14	APP 17	EDU 12	SAN 75	HP 13

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

YUKIKO TAKAMORI, age 11, School Girl

STR 06	CON 08	SIZ 07	INT 15	POW 13
DEX 08	APP 14	EDU 07	SAN 65	HP 08

Damage Bonus: –1D4

Weapons: none.

SAIGO TAKAMORI'S ONRYÔ, Leader of Satsuma Rebellion

*STR 18	*CON 14	*DEX 18	INT 14	POW 24

**Embodied, its physical stats supercede those of the possessed body. Normal onryô fully possess a single body and assume that person's physical attributes. This onryô has not yet learned how to do that, so it invests POW for heightened physical characteristics, at a cost of 1 POW per characteristic point increase.*

Damage Bonus: according to size of host body.

Weapons: "Fist/Punch 68%, damage 1D4+db

*Katana (if it can find one) 75%, damage 1D10+db

**In host body only.*

Puppetry (Temporary Possession): As a recently-created onryô, it is unable to perform full possession to permanently take over a human body. The creature is only able to effect a weaker form of control. The onryô attacks a target by matching its POW against the target's magic points on the Resistance Table. If it wins, the onryô drains 1D6 magic points. If the target has no magic points or is drained to 0 magic points, the onryô instantly possesses the mind of the target and is able to control the body for 3D6 rounds. During this interval, the victim's awareness is forced into the deepest recesses of his or her psyche while the onryô is dominant. After puppetry, the host has no memory of events and is quite weak. The host also needs to make a 1/1D6 SAN check after touching the mind of an entity so foul.

Essence Drain: Following a successful roll of the onryô's POW against the desired ability of the target, the onryô can drain 1D3 points of that ability. Unless drained to 0 points, which causes coma, the ability returns at a rate of 1 point per day of bed rest. Draining a target to 0 CON kills the target. Furthermore, whenever an onryô kills a victim via CON drain, it automatically gains 1D6 POW from that target. (Takamori's onryô is performing the hin-no-maru slayings through CON drain attacks.)

Dispelling: Once formed, nothing can stop an onryô; most people practice prevention. Feudal warriors were known to try to appease the spirits of slain enemies to prevent an onryô from forming. Buddhist monks and ascetics are solicited to perform religious services for such vengeful spirits. At times, onryô are deified to avoid their wrath. They are vulnerable to magic attacks but are vicious in their revenge.

POW Replenishment: Since an onryô is in essence a very warped kami, the fear it generates in the living causes it to regenerate 1D3 POW a day.

Sanity Loss: 1D4/1D8+2 SAN to see its true demonic form or the essence draining process.

Meiro (The Labyrinth)

There will come a day when the Emperor must deny his rightful place with the kami. Forced to deny his birthright on this day, the Eagle and the Lion will be joyous. The Great Dragon will stir after 3000 years of slumber.

—The Shimura Taizen.

"The Labyrinth" is recommended for three or more investigators new to the *Cthulhu Japan* setting. The ratio of Japanese to foreign investigators in a group is not important to the outcome of the scenario, but keepers should be aware certain areas will need to be played differently for non-native investigators. Language hurdles, both reading and speaking, are most likely the biggest problem. The theme of "Meiro" is wheels within wheels. Keepers can choose to further darken the mood by increasing the level of infiltration into Mappo Media and the secondary motives of the Black Monk. Investigators are in the role of fish out of water; the further they dive, the harder it becomes to reach the safety of shore again.

The *Kinki Kyôten* need not be the tome in this scenario if the keeper does not wish it so, and investigators need not lay hands on it at the end of the adventure if the keeper is not yet ready to introduce a Mythos tome.

The time period is the present. Many elements of the scenario are dependent upon the "Japan Inc." phenomenon of postwar Japan, but it can be flexibly played any time from the late 1970s to the present day with modifications. Certain cultural themes may be too difficult to portray in 1890s or 1920s Japan.

Seasons are important to Japanese sensibilities. "The Labyrinth" is set in Autumn. The leaves are vivid hues of orange and red and the windy season brings a gusty chill to the night air.

Exact dimensions or distances on the maps are not vital to gameplay; confusing building interiors are. (See maps on pages 278 and 279.) Keepers are encouraged to come up with more complex floor plans of the Buddha's Tears compound if they desire.

Keepers wishing to expand the length of the scenario can put more steps into finding the headquarters of Mappo Media. Expanding the time and interactions at Yotsubishi Psi-Mech is sure to give the conclusion deeper impact. To shorten play, the keeper can simply get right to Mappo Media in Saitama Prefecture.

Investigation into the meaning behind the consumer products of Mappo Media and its parent company is important to piecing together all of the turns in the maze. Investigators can rush blindly in, but they will miss part of the picture and possibly be dangerously off guard.

"The Labyrinth" is essentially in three acts, each becoming more complex. If the keeper wishes to stretch this into three nights, each act can stand on its own as a separate adventure. Keepers could easily end each night in a cliff-hanger fashion.

Keeper Information

If the investigators are foreign: Start them on the West Coast of the United States. They have been contacted by the entertainment subsidiary of Yotsubishi Industries America. Scattered bizarre incidents, including seizures, are occurring with children who buy the Japanese animation title *Kappa-Mon*. The content of these cartoons about monsters is disturbing. Further, the companion merchandise of *Kappa-Mon* manga and *The Kappa-Mon Card Game* instill a ravenous obsession with collecting the products.

As licensed distributor for Mappo Media in the United States, Yotsubishi America is highly embarrassed by these incidents. The FCC is breathing down their necks and YIA needs answers. Their parent corporation in Japan has been unresponsive on the issue so they have taken the matter into their own hands. Yotsubishi Entertainment America received trusted recommendations that the investigators were skilled in this type of matter, so the executives would like to retain their services.

Arrangements have been made to fly the investigators, all expenses paid, to Tokyo where a bilingual Yotsubishi Japan liaison will meet them and be at their disposal.

If the investigators are Japanese: A contact in Yotsubishi Entertainment Japan has notified the investigators of a public relations nightmare. It seems YEJ chose to license and distribute products of a relatively obscure manga company, Mappo Media. Reports are pouring in about highly offensive and disturbing content in Mappo Media's manga and anime. Parent groups are in an uproar about the public airing last week of a Mappo Media episode of *Kappa-Mon* that caused four hundred seizures nationwide. To top it off, a dozen of the children were missing in the hospital wards. It is taking every resource at YEJ to keep the mass media in check on this story.

Getting Started

Their liaison, Midori Uragi-San, will meet the investigators upon arrival at Yotsubishi Corporate Tower in downtown Tokyo. In her late thirties, Ms. Uragi is a conservatively dressed career businesswoman with a disarming smile. The keeper, acting as Ms. Uragi, will patiently and thoroughly answer all of the investigators' questions to

Yotsubishi Corporate ID Badge Authorization Levels

White—guest
Red—service staff
Green—administrative employee
Yellow—executive
Brown—security
Blue—technician
Silver—specialist
Gold—chairperson

Labyrinth Papers #1: Yotsubishi IDs

Labyrinth Papers #2: Newspaper Clipping

THE YOMIYURI SHIMBUN — THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2004 — A4

Video Pulled from Market

AJP Wire Contributed

The wildly popular anime OVA *Oni Dôji* was taken from store shelves in a surprise move yesterday. The cult hit was removed due to pressure from local community groups who claimed it was too disturbing. The anime video revolves around the clever plot of a tentacled horror, killing and devouring watchers of a cursed video after they watch it the 108th time. Oni Dôji, a young fiend, is the "hero" of the piece who battles the menace when it appears. Complaints revolve around the graphic depiction of the deaths by the animated monster. Psychologists expressed concern about the soundtrack as well; early reports indicate that the chanting in the video may unhinge some viewers. It is unknown if Mappo Media, the video producers located in Saitama Prefecture, plan to pull their manga comic series as well. Mappo Media officials were unavailable for comment.

Mappo Media publicity materials also advertise a product aimed at pre-teens called *Kappa-Mon*, centered around a card game based on cute monsters. *Kappa-Mon* is derived from mythical amphibious creatures of vampiric tendencies. Slated for release early next year, a full media blitz of anime and manga is promised for *Kappa-Mon*.

Labyrinth Papers #3: Newspaper Clipping

ASAHI BUSINESS REPORT — 25/12/2002

NAME CHANGE, MERGER ATTEMPT

In an interesting move, Kyoto based Noritomo Pharmaceuticals was bid upon by multinational conglomerate Yotsubishi Heavy Industries. Not a hostile attempt, Noritomo nonetheless quickly acquired two smaller firms in an attempt to diversify. New Media, a computer and video game publisher, was attained at the same time as BC Press, a privately owned manga company. The new entity, Mappo Media, will function as the media arm of Noritomo. The goal is higher public profile and profitability.

the best of her ability. The key is to put the players at ease and win their trust with her character. She will be their lifeline, either in the corporation or with the Japanese public, or both.

All investigators are offered complementary business suits, debit cards, and green striped Yotsubishi ID badges which clip on the breast pocket. (See Labyrinth Papers #1, page 271). Ms. Uragi possesses a metallic gold stripe on her ID badge.

If the group wishes to do some background research into Mappo Media and its products she will be more than happy to direct the investigators to the YEJ Media Archive.

If they wish to rest and freshen up, she will direct them to Yotsubishi Corporate Dormitories, a drab concrete bunker near Yotsubishi Tower. There is a corporate store and commissary nearby.

MIDORI URAGI

Other, delicate matters will get them sent to Yotsubishi Security, which will outfit the group for field work.

Ms. Midori Uragi, Yotsubishi Corporate Liaison/Dugpa

STR 10	CON 9	SIZ 10	INT 15	POW 14
DEX 14	APP 12	EDU 14	SAN 38	HP 10

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db
Tanto Dagger 45%, 1D4+db

Skills: Corporate Culture 78%, Psychology 45%, Other Language (English) 79%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%.

Spells: Call Emerald Lama, Summon Emerald Lama

Player Information

The players have several choices. They can choose to:

1. Relax, recover from jet lag, and befriend their new hosts.
2. Do research on Mappo Media in the YEJ Media Archives and try to discover who pulls the strings.
3. Do some personal investigation into Yotsubishi itself.
4. Proceed directly to Mappo Media's headquarters in nearby Saitama Prefecture (an hour by train).

Yotsubishi

Something seems a bit off about YEJ. An Idea roll by an investigator will reveal that far too few employees mill about in the hallways. Inquiries on this matter to Ms. Uragi will be deftly brushed off. An Intelligence roll can reveal Ms. Uragi is definitely hiding something, but she proves far too skilled to determine just what. It may just be a trait of Japanese corporate culture.

Investigators will perhaps find out more about Yotsubishi by going to the commissary and corporate store and eavesdropping. Employees seem polite enough but quickly become guarded if it is revealed that the investigators are not "part of the family." It will take about an hour of casual conversation using Persuade and Corporate Culture on other employees to determine all the ID badge authorization levels.

Forging or altering the badges is all but impossible as they are coated with holographic film bearing a transparent grid of the Yotsubishi logo. Permanent ID badges also bear the name of the

employee and must be used in conjunction with retinal scans and handprints at biometric checkpoints in secure areas of the building.

If the investigators dress the part of salarymen they can also determine that the 55 story Yotsubishi Corporate Tower also has 15 sub-levels underground, where "all the interesting stuff happens." A Luck roll will garner some juicy rumors about Project Yûrei and Psi-Mech. See pages 193–195 and 200–205 for more on these groups.

In the Archives

Ms. Uragi will guide the group to the archives and excuse herself. The room is impressive. The decor is abstract and sleek—very corporate. YEJ's Media Archive contains samples and copies of every product they have distributed in the last twenty years as well as reviews and advertisements, primarily in the Japanese language. Nearly half the room is metal shelves filled with row after row of video tape and film filed by date and volume. Pull-out drawers in the walls offer storage for print media and fragile items. A media console system runs flush with the wall to preview items from the archives. A display case contains a stylized *mon*, a crest of Yotsubishi, of four swords crossed inward to form an "x" with a diamond in the center where they intersect.

The center of the room contains an extensive microfiche catalogue. Microfiche is organized alphabetically by year. The information needed is not hidden but the sheer volume of information presents a lengthy search. The longer they are willing to search the better armed they will be for the second part of the scenario.

After 20 minutes of using the microfiche, the team will find that several key microfiches have been removed from the catalogue. An Idea roll will determine that poring through the advertisements might yield the names of the Mappo Media products—an indirect way to find the relevant shelves containing the product samples. After one hour of searching, two interesting news clippings will surface (see *Labyrinth Papers #2* and *#3* on page 272).

For every hour the investigators are willing to search the archive, the more hints the keeper should drop about the corrupt and mind controlling nature of Mappo Media products.

Yotsubishi Securities

After 1D12 hours hanging out either in the archives, dorms or commissary, a woman in a lab coat will approach the group of investigators. She seems to know who they are and has some interesting data for them. Introducing herself as Professor Mari Makoto she will offer to take them to her lab where she has done some *interesting* analysis on the *Kappa-Man* manga. If they go along willingly, she will usher them into the sub-basement levels of Yotsubishi Tower to Psi-Mech, a platinum security area. After passing four pistol-packing (!) Yotsubishi security guards, they will enter a steel elevator that requires a swipe of a level blue or higher ID card and palm print scanner to operate.

MARI MAKOTO

[A Cultural Knowledge roll will confirm that guns are indeed illegal for private citizens in Japan to possess. The penalties for possession are quite draconian.)

Professor Makoto will take them to her lab and get right to the point. They will not be allowed to roam and armed guards will escort them back to the professor's side. The lab is loaded with cutting edge instrumentation. A successful Education or Science skill roll would seem to suggest materials engineering and high energy research.

Professor Makoto has run a spectrum analyzer on the paper of *Kappa-Man* manga and playing cards. A controlled substance has been pressed into the fibers of the paper. A drug is absorbed into the blood stream in low doses through skin contact with the paper. It accumulates in the blood stream and at a certain threshold, the drug causes obsession, paranoia, and extreme suggestibility. After sharing her findings, Professor Makoto will slip the group a piece of paper and dismiss them. For more on the drug, see the sidebar on page 161.

PROF. MARI MAKOTO, Age 35, Brilliant Parapsychologist and Mechanical Engineer

STR 09	CON 13	SIZ 08	INT 18	POW 15
DEX 12	APP 17	EDU 26	SAN 78	HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Spells: Enchant Ink, Summon/Bind Lesser Kami, Summon/Bind Yôkai, Create Yôkai, Spine of the Dragon.

Skills: Computer Use 55%, Corporate Culture 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 07%, Credit Rating 80%, Electrical Repair 89%, Electronics 90%, Library Use 58%, Lore (Shinto) 39%, Mechanical Repair 85%, Occult 60%, Operate Heavy Machine 25%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 85%, Persuade 48%, Physics 68%, Ultra-Tech Mechanical Repair 65%.

The Note

In the scrawled note Professor Makoto has a request. She is concerned about the disappearance of a colleague who works with her at Yotsubishi Psi-Mech and at the Todai Campus Research Labs. His disappearance may be related to the investigators' own case.

Doctor Daisuke Yamaguchi (a photo is enclosed) has been in deep cover working inside a pharmaceutical firm in Kyoto. He has been discreetly looking into the matter of the Kappa-Man drug the professor has dubbed "Hokke Kusuri." In the last three weeks, he has not answered his calls and is not at his rental apartment. Professor Makoto believes that something terrible might have happened to him, and that Mappo Media has caught on to his probing. She asks that in the course of their investigation the player characters look into his disappearance and report back to her or Ms. Uragi if they receive any new information on his whereabouts. Her last sentence in the note is the most cryptic: "Use the eye to find him." The keeper might wish to write up the note as a player's handout and to further aid in roleplaying the scene.

Around Tokyo

If the investigators take to the street to find consumer products from Mappo Media, it won't be difficult. A night on the town will reveal the pervasiveness of Mappo Media's products. Depending upon time constraints, the keeper is free to extend this exploration of the streets of Tokyo into an entire gaming session as investigators go into seedy Yakuza owned strip clubs, all night karaoke bars, and rabid otaku collector hangouts in search of more information. It is recommended the keeper go to the library or buy a tour guide book on Tokyo as it will help immensely; each colorful ward of Tokyo offers great Mythos

opportunities. Keepers should focus on the red light district of Shinjuku Ward, the dance and bar district of Roppongi Ward, and the 24 hour electronic gadget and otaku heaven of neon lit Akihabara Ward.

Tokyo magazine stands carry the *Kappa-Mon Legacy* manga series, about the fight of the kappa to defend their underwater kingdoms from the incursions of the evil man-beasts.

After interviews on the street, the investigators will be told that "Kraven Collector" is THE center of all things Kappa-Mon. The store is located on the top floor of a popular six story video game arcade, "Supa Wado," in Akihabara Ward.

Within Kraven Collector, the investigators will find the store proprietor who calls himself "Otaku-San." He speaks in third person when referring to himself. ("Otaku" is a derogatory Japanese word for anyone fanatically obsessed with collecting memorabilia to the exclusion of all other life pursuits.) Slightly overweight with a rotund belly, his personal hygiene leaves much to be desired as stains from previous meals of ramen and sandwiches cover the middle of a yellowed shirt with a "Noodle Power!" logo. His glasses are thick and his forehead and hair are extremely greasy. However, despite his unappealing appearance, this man is considered a guru on all things anime and manga. With a Fast Talk: Persuasion or Zoku (Otaku) roll, the investigators can acquire a black market copy of the *Kappa-Mon* eight part original video series from him.

What the investigators will find is that a large fanatical otaku fan base follows *Kappa-Mon* and even the older *Oni Déji* series quite religiously. Most also avidly play a reality horror console game, *Bio-Evil*, set in the same fictional world.

OTAKU-SAN, Age 26, Owner of Kraven Collector

STR 07	CON 10	SIZ 12	INT 15	POW 08
DEX 09	APP 07	EDU 15	SAN 48	HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Bargain 58%, Computer Use 85%, Cthulhu Mythos 03%, Credit Rating 30%, Fast Talk 55%, Lore (Anime & Manga) 89%, Occult 20%, Operate Store 45%, Persuade 48%, Poor Hygiene 59%, Psychology 56%, Zoku (Otaku) 95%.

Mappo Media

The next course of action is to look into Mappo Media's address in Saitama. Saitama City is a drab and depressing city with nothing "touristy" to offer. Expressionless blue-collar Japanese workers trudge to auto and textile factories down roads caked with oily pollution in air perpetually choked with smog. During the one hour trip to Mappo Media in Saitama Prefecture, buildings in the scenery go from skyscrapers to two and three story concrete boxes but the endless sprawl of city never breaks between the two cities. Little or no green can be seen from the train and the air is heavy with the stagnant stench of machinery. The Mappo Media address will reveal a locked empty warehouse in the sleepy industrial outskirts of Saitama city. The cold autumn air howls through the windows of the building. If the investigators choose to break in, they will find dust and cobwebs, indicating that the building may never have been used.

A heaviness hangs in the air inside. An uncomfortable nausea will sneak up on any who stay in the warehouse for more than 1D10 minutes. The sickness is due to the residual chemicals soaked into the timbers of the structure. Those who fail to leave, lose consciousness in 1D10 minutes, and 1 CON an hour. (At 0 CON, they die.)

Tea Time

A dead end. The investigators may be stumped at this point. A Luck or Idea roll will bring up the issue of mail: where is it sent if not here? If the group arrives during the day and stakes out the grounds, around noon a mail truck will drive up and stuff mail in the Mappo Media box.

If they wait another hour or so, something happens. A frail old man, an *oji-san*, will arrive on bicycle and gather up the mail. If the player characters merely follow the oji-san, the old man will go to a private residence and stay there.

Approaching the oji-san yields better results: a Cultural Etiquette roll will garner an invite into his tidy yet simple home for tea and rice crackers.

The oji-san will disappear into the kitchen and return with refreshments. The old man will cheerfully volunteer that he is a retired city clerk who takes the business mail and sends it to a Kyoto address. He does it as a favor to his grand-nephew who works there, Yamaguchi-Chan. It's strange that he has not heard from his grand-nephew in so long. It seems like years. If the investigators play along with the niceties, he will gladly write down the address he sends the mail to in Kyoto:

> 1-Chu, Maru-michi, Hachi-Chome
> Hiei-zan Ku, Kyoto-Ken
> 679-001

Coming Back

After tea, the old man ushers the investigators out—he has errands he must run. The keeper should have one of the investigators mistakenly keep the man's pen or forget an item in the home.

When the investigators quickly return to knock on the door, there is no answer. If they enter the unlocked home, the interior is drastically different from minutes before—the tatami mat floors and furniture are there as before but now rotted and aged. A buzzing of flies emanates from the kitchen. A peculiar odor will assault their nostrils as they close on the room; a "juicy" corpse in an advanced decomposed state will be on the floor in the kitchen. It wears the same clothes as the oji-san but in a highly deteriorated state.

Keepers who really work up a gruesome and creepy description of this scene might opt for a 0/1D2 SAN check. Closer examination of the body reveals a set of green Buddhist prayer beads that appear to have strangled him to death. A Medicine roll will reveal he has been dead for many months.

Keepers wishing to further spice this scene up might choose to have the yûrei of the old man reappear in his decomposed state and scare off the intruders. As a yûrei, he has long spindly digits, messy hair and a torso that tapers off into a wisp.

OJI-SAN, Yûrei/Disembodied Spirit

INT 15 POW 12 APP (11 as old man/0 in rotted state)

Damage Bonus: none.

Special Attack: Attacking, the oji-san appears to claw at a target, leaving red streaking welts on the victim's skin. He can drain 1D3 POW in such an attack (contest of victim's POW versus his own). If he loses such a contest, the oji-san loses 1D6 POW; drained to 0 POW he will dissipate, but reform after two weeks' time.

Armor: None, but immaterial and so immune to all physical weapons except magically enchanted ones.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8 to see the oji-san in his most horrid visage, a decomposing death mask.

Kyoto Bound

If the investigators report back to Yotsubishi in Tokyo on their findings, Ms. Uragi will insist that she go along on the Kyoto leg of the trip. After all, the leaves are beautiful this time of year in Kyoto.

Arrival at the address leads the team of investigators through the heart of the ancient capital of Kyoto and right out of it again to a mountain valley address buried deep behind monastery covered Mount Hiei.

It should be noted that Japanese addresses are tricky things as many streets have no names, and many mailmen practice the arcane art of Urban Navigation to find their destinations on the winding, twisting and curving streets.

Asking around to find the address should take the investigators the better part of a day. Since they were directed to be discreet by their employers at Yotsubishi, going to a koban, a police box, for directions is probably not a good idea. The investigators will quickly find themselves detained for questioning if they take this route, for reasons made clear later in the scenario. Fast Talk and Law may extract them from detention but not a police tail.

The address leads to a long winding dirt road ending in an 18-foot tall Shinto torii gate of black iron surrounded by forest. A successful Spot Hidden will detect two surveillance cameras mounted on poles and obscured by branches. Engraved into the black gate are two kanji:

仏
涙

Japanese investigators will have no problem; foreign investigators must make a Japanese Language roll. The phrase in question is "Buddha's Tears."

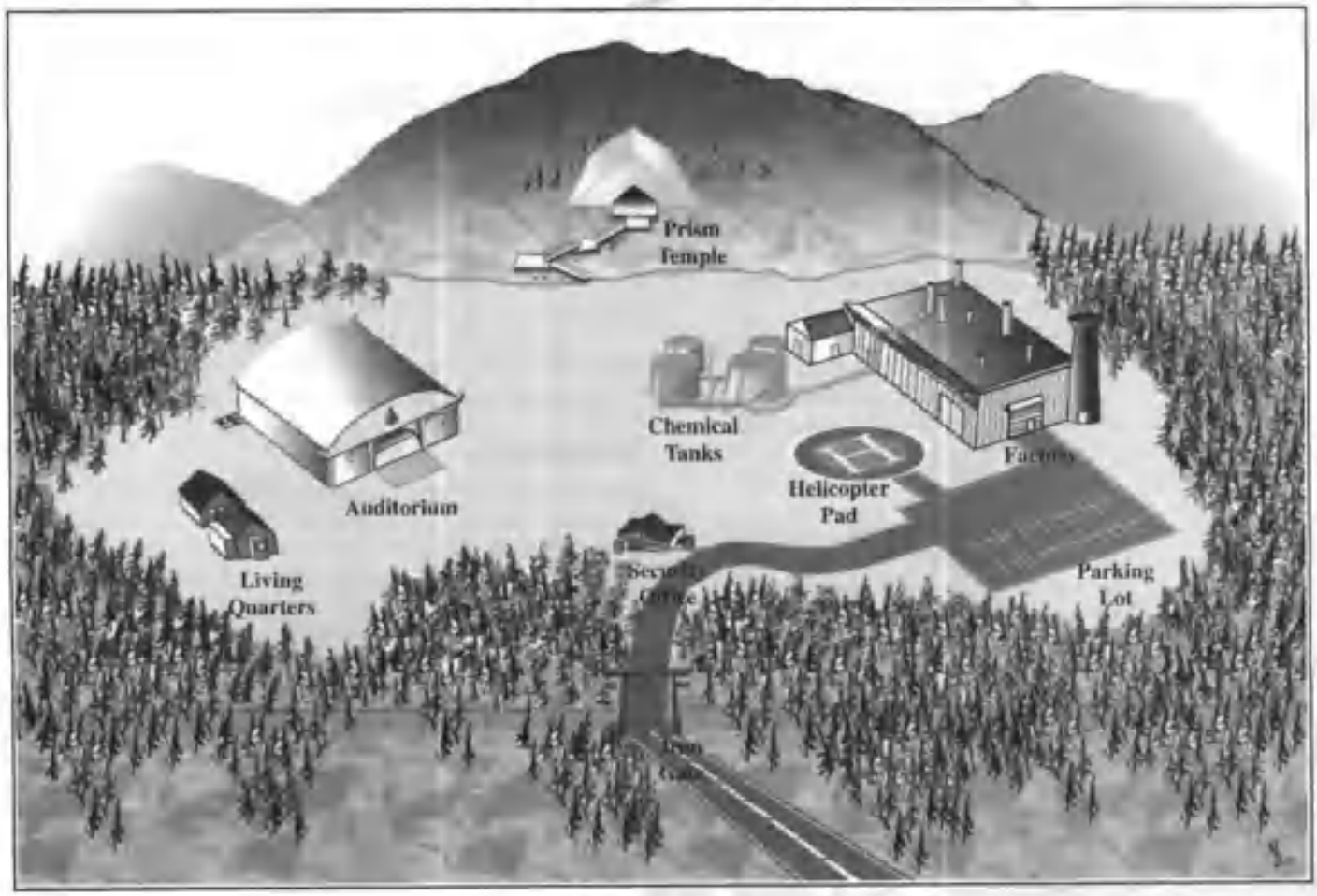
Tetsu torii, the iron gate

Sneaking In: If Ms. Uragi is in tow, sneaking past the gates is not an option. If, however, the investigators are on their own they can try to sneak past the video eye and get over the electrified fence flanking the gate and hidden in the underbrush.

Stake Out: One option is to stake out the gate and wait for someone to enter or exit. Investigators might choose to hide in the underbrush near the dirt road. The keeper should secretly roll 3D6 x10 to determine the number of minutes before someone arrives at the gate.

When it gets dark, the temperature drops quickly. The keeper should emphasize the uncomfortable nature of the underbrush.

The Buddha's Tears Compound



including biting insects. If unprepared for the cold temperatures, investigators may have to make a few CON x5 checks to stay awake and withstand the night air. After night fall, a strange chanting is heard when the breeze blows in the direction of the hiding investigators. Those with a good nose will detect the odor of incense and saltpeter.

Undercover: If the investigators have done their homework, they may try to infiltrate the compound by entering as delivery people (or stowing away on a truck).

Sacred Space

Once beyond the iron gate, the dirt road continues several acres until opening into a clearing with a large compound of buildings. The building nearest to the road is a security outpost/welcome center. Beyond that is a structure akin to a gymnasium or auditorium. Next to the auditorium are two dormitories, providing living quarters for the higher echelon cultists. Further off in the opposite direction is a large square building covered with corrugated siding. A dozen metal stacks spew clouds of smoke from its roof. The largest building is shaped like a concrete prism built right into the side of a small mountain. (See the map on page 275.)

Night Patrol of Tears

If the investigators arrive under cover of darkness and wait to observe, a group of 2D4 people wearing white tabards over red robes walks in what appears to be a routine patrol of the grounds. Each person wears a Buddhist rosary on his or her left wrist and carries a small hand crossbow in his or her right. All of the tabards have a large symbol on the chest area. Of the 2D4 in a patrol, most tabards have the red symbol of a teardrop. One always has the symbol of a hand. On rare occasions, one person will have the symbol of an eye. An Idea roll can determine some hierarchal structure to the people in robes.

Day Dream

If the investigators arrive during the day, hundreds of people in white tabards and red robes will be scattered across the compound performing various menial tasks, such as gardening, sweeping, and digging. Some mill about and sing to themselves, some laugh maniacally or pull at their hair while others calmly chat in groups. The impression of a mental ward shouldn't be hard to convey in this scene. Small groups of 1D8 walk in patrols around the compound armed with crossbows. Each is led by a person wearing a tabard with a hand symbol.

The majority of the people sport red teardrops on their tabards. One in twenty have hand symbols. One in one hundred have eye symbols. One or two wear red and black hooded robes and walk with a 6' staff topped off with a red gem. Each of these people wears a tabard with a stylized white fang-filled mouth centered on the chest.

Blending In

Perhaps the easiest way to penetrate further into the compound is by taking someone's clothes. The keeper should reward inventive thinking on getting past the patrols. Investigators should make Sneak, Hide and Spot Hidden rolls at the keeper's discretion while they snoop around.

The Auditorium

The closest building is a large auditorium with a hardwood floor. Dirty white matting covers the floor where hundreds of followers sit in orderly rows facing the stage. Each sits in seiza on his or her haunches and bends forward to a large painting filling the far wall. Between each bow they chant from a small *jabara-ori* (accordion style folded text). The painting on the far wall is two stories tall and is a picture of an older man with a knotted scraggly grey beard and the white robes of a yamabushi. The most striking feature is the milky white orbs the man has for eyes.

A successful Religion or Occult roll will identify the man as Asahara Shinyama, leader of the new religion Buddha's Tears, or Butsu no Namida.

The Factory

The hastily built metal warehouse structure belches smoke. Four large chemical storage tanks are located outside, connected to the building by pipes. A small white sign outside the office door is written in English: "Noritomo Pharmaceuticals." Venturing inside reveals a half dozen different manufacturing lines all operating at once, all open and unwalled. Manning the positions are people wearing teardrop-symbol tabards.

Any investigator with the Pharmacy skill will recognize that a good part of the production floor is dedicated to a chemical factory. A successful Chemistry roll will reveal the chemical compounds that they are fabricating. In several refrigerated tanks are the components for sarin and mustard gas, manufactured from the raw materials stored in the tanks outside.

In another section of the plant, a large printing press runs off copies of Kappa-Mon cards and manga. The same nauseating odor the investigators smelled in the abandoned Mappo Media building issues from the press machines. (See page 181 for details on the substance.)

One area of the factory floor is full of animators busily slaving at tables. They paint acetate cells to be used in manga or anime.

The final area is walled off. The door is locked. A Locksmith roll will get it opened. Over a hundred VCRs and DVD burners make copies of videos for distribution. On the screen perverse acts are carried out between the tentacled beast and Oni Dōji.

The Prism Temple

By this point, the investigators have clearly established that all the information they have gathered so far proves this compound to be the point of origination for all of the damaging Mappo Media products. Besides snatched copies of the corrupt materials, they still do not have hard, paper evidence of guilt for the authorities (no filing cabinets or records in the other buildings).

There is also the secondary mission to consider; the inside man, Doctor Yamaguchi, has not been contacted to verify his safety.

The temple is the most difficult and dangerous part of scenario.

Guarding the Gate

Two teams of eight guards flank the single triangular entrance. If the investigators are convincing cultists they can enter without a hitch. (Some knowledge of Buddha's Tears is helpful here. Without it, the investigators will get in . . . getting out is a different matter.) The guards at the entry level are actually not very bright; getting past them should not be so difficult if the investigators blend in properly.

BUDDHA'S TEARS, Fanatical Cultists

char.	*Tears*	*Hands*	*Eyes*	*Mouths*
STR	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
CON	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
SIZ	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
INT	2D6	3D6	3D6+2	3D6+6
POW	2D6	2D6+6	3D6+6	3D6+8
DEX	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
APP	3D6	3D6	3D6	3D6
HP	10–11	10–11	10–11	10–11

Move 8

Av. Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+db
Bow of Karma (crossbow) 50%, damage 1D4+2
Other weapons as appropriate.

Spells: Tears, none; Hands, 1D2; Eyes, 1D4; Mouths, 2D4. Common ones would be those from *The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears* or *Kinki Kyōten*, especially Dance of Karma (Bestow Karma); Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Instant Enlightenment, and Prolong the Suffering (Healing).

Armor: none.

Skills:

- Tears—Cthulhu Mythos 01%, Dodge 37%, Hide 38%, Listen 33%, Lore (Buddhism) 06%, Meditation 10%, Sneak 53%, Spot Hidden 41%, Zoku (Otaku, Ronin, or choose one) 40%.
- Hands—Cthulhu Mythos 06%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 32%, Hide 47%, Listen 40%, Lore (Buddhism) 19%, Martial Art (Choose One) 40%, Meditation 22%, Occult 11%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 27%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Zoku (choose one) 50%, Zoku (Yakuza) 40%.
- Eyes—Accounting 41%, Credit Rating 38%, Cthulhu Mythos 13%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 50%, Listen 46%, Lore (Buddhism) 34%, Meditation 35%, Occult 25%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 34%, Shōdō 15%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 55%, Zoku (Yakuza) 50%.
- Mouths—Accounting 50%, Credit Rating 56%, Cthulhu Mythos 21%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 70%, Listen 59%, Lore (Buddhism) 61%, Meditation 47%, Occult 46%, Persuade 71%, Psychology 41%, Shōdō 42%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 60%, Zoku (Yakuza) 60%.

The keeper may modify these skill lists as deemed appropriate.

Beads of 108 Sins: Tears carry a small collapsible hand crossbow made of sacred Japanese cypress, hinoki. The stout bolts are made also of hinoki and the fletchings of lotus paper. The tip of the shaft is a nasty silver tri-blade and along the length of the shaft is a sutra prayer, "The Truth of Samsara," taken from the text of *The Forbidden Sutra*. The Tear expends 10 magic points when firing. If the bolt slays a person, the soul is drawn into the Buddhist rosary on his wrist. Each bead with a trapped soul contains 1 point of POW, representing the last vestige of that soul's essence. The high priests of the cult, The Mouths of Buddha, use these rosaries to power their dark rituals. Preferably they desire fully enchanted rosaries, but nothing stops them from utilizing partial beads.

The Labyrinth

What keeps Asahara Shinyama's sanctum safe is the diabolical eight-pointed-star labyrinth a person must navigate to get to the lower levels. After walking through the entryway, the investigators enter into a nondescript triangular room. On the far side of the room is a rotating door. Beyond the door, a narrow hallway splits off in four directions at a 30 degree angle. The way is lighted by a fluorescent source 20 feet above.

Into the Dragon's pit

Once the group enters the hallway, a pressure plate in the floor activates a hidden panel that rotates the entryway to the triangular room shut, locking the investigators into the eight pointed star labyrinth. The door back outside will only open again if the door to the central elevator shaft is open as well. Finding their point of origin in the maze can be done with Spot Hidden to find the seam of the rotating circular floor. A marker of some sort would also be a wise idea.

Keepers should closely guard the overall bird's eye composition of the labyrinth, forcing the players to roleplay it in first person. Building a map through verbal description and exploration provides the best fun.

The goal of navigating this labyrinth is to find the hidden door in order to enter the eight-sided room in the center containing the elevator to the lower four sub levels.

Spelling it Out

An INT x5 roll will reveal that perhaps there is some key to navigating. If any investigators recalled cultists that entered, they had prayer books in hand. If one of the investigators had the presence of mind to grab one of the accordion-folded prayer booklets, a Luck or Education roll might garner a clue that the chant booklet has something to do with navigating the maze. On one page, a chant is in English with the first letter of each line capped. (see *Labyrinth Papers #4*, this page).

Let the players have fun trying to figure out if singing the chant opens the door or the number of syllables has something to do with or the word count, or what have you. The more creative the better.

The answer, however, is quite elementary. The first letter of each line is a route on the map. For example, a Capital "M" means you follow an m-shaped path in the maze. So . . .

Key to navigate the Labyrinth to the door: M M M H I I M M

The middle bit is tricky—"H" is I minus I or zero, the negation of the middle three letters, meaning you ignore "H," "I," "I" in navigation. Following this "map" by taking the "right-hand" path will lead a person quickly to the exit. (Knowledge of the overall design of the maze is helpful—investigators can choose to explore the maze first.)

The Triangle Platform

At the correct place where the exit lies (marked as "E" on the map, the right-hand triangle), the investigators must use the key yet again. This time, they must hum the eight letters to open the coded biometric voice lock. (The lock opens to a certain sequence of the specific harmonic

Labyrinth Papers #4

My life is but a fleeting thing,
My mind is weak and easily controlled,
My Heart is moved, by the tears of the Buddha.
He cries for us, blind are we to the suffering of this world.
I will stop his tears, I will be his soldier.
I will stop the turning of the wheel.
My life is but a fleeting thing,
My mind is weak and easily controlled.

—Mantra in *Doctrine of Buddha's Tears*.

pitches.) A narrow slice of triangular rock will slide down until it is flush with the floor. Nothing more will happen until weight is placed upon the triangle (like standing upon it). Up to four people can fit comfortably on top of the triangle. After weight is placed on the triangle, a wall panel slides up to reveal the octagon-shaped central room with the elevator and access to the sub-levels.

Dangerous Diversion

Of course, for investigators who like to plow through scenarios without thinking things through, the keeper has plenty of places to put nasty surprises. There are actually two additional sliding triangular pillars (marked as "T" on the map), activated by the same voice key and which open in the same manner as the one described above.

False Pillar 1 (Cardinal East)

When the four people enter this triangular space the stone pillar will do one of two things:

- Plunge down two sub levels. This causes 2D6 falling damage to the four victims.
- Rapidly slam upwards. If the characters cannot escape (DEX x3 roll), they suffer 1D4 crushing damage per round until death. A combined STR of 20 is required to halt the pillar's crushing onset.

False Pillar 2 (Cardinal North)

The triangular pillar slowly continues to sink beyond floor level forming a pitch black triangular pit (slow enough to easily escape). In 1D4 rounds a formless spawn erupts from the dark pit to attack the investigators. (See the *Call of Cthulhu* rules, "Creatures of the Mythos—Formless Spawn," for statistics.)

Contact!

Navigating the other sub levels of the Prism Temple is pretty straightforward. The elevator shaft has four numbers (in Japanese). The sidebar on page 279 details the contents of each floor.

The second sub-level yields pay dirt. Hard at work in the labs is Doctor Yamaguchi. He seems very frazzled and focused on his work, his hair is unkempt and he is bone thin. Wearing a white lab coat, his pocket bears the eye insignia.

If Ms. Uragi is still with the group, he is combative and uncooperative but won't reveal why. Trying to talk to him with her in the room is a lost cause. He will insist she leave the room so they can talk. Ms. Uragi will appear genuinely puzzled but comply.

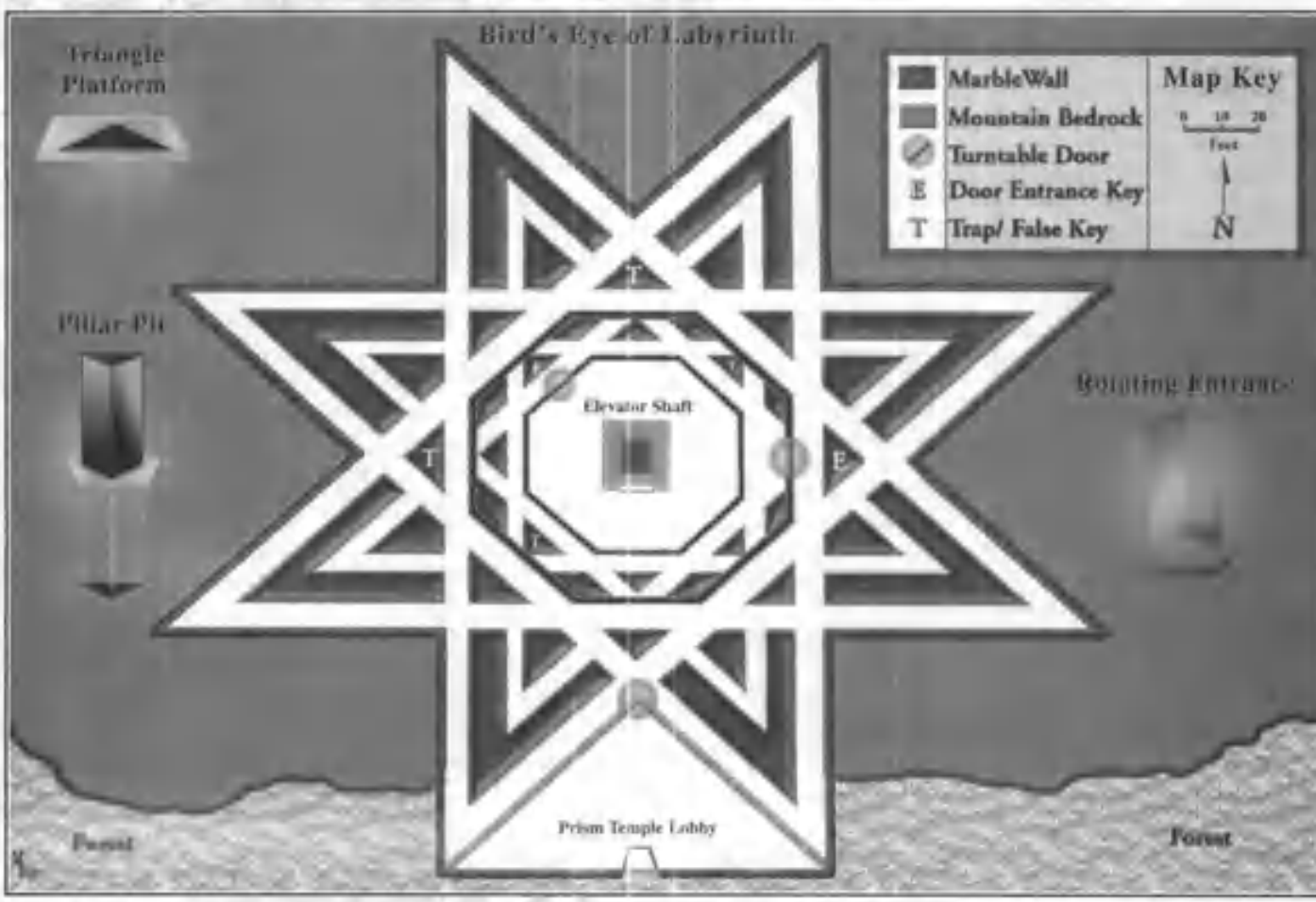
If the investigators can isolate him from observation by prying eyes in the sub-level, he agrees to speak to them though with great reluctance. Mentioning the personal note from Professor Makoto will ease his distrust.

Doctor Yamaguchi will ask the investigators to follow him to sub-level three so they can talk in peace.

DR. YAMAGUCHI, Age 48, Buddha's Eye, Director of Bio-Chem Division

STR 11	CON 12	SIZ 09	INT 17	POW 14
DEX 14	APP 08	EDU 22	SAN 25	HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.



Weapons: Hypodermic Syringe 70%, damage special. Use only impale result; the syringe contains highly virulent bio-toxins and mutagenics of POT 20 poison. The keeper should be creative with a successful attack's effects.

Skills: Administration 56%, Biology 80%, Chemistry 80%, Library Use 65%, Medicine 75%, Occult 10%, Persuade 38%, Parasitology 65%, Pharmacology 55%, Virology 65%.

Sub-Level Three, The Treasury

The elevator stops on the third sub-level but the door does not open. Doctor Yamaguchi sings the entire Japanese version of the Mantra Chant in an off key voice. The elevator door opens.

This level is elegant and chic. Black marble floors and rice paper sliding doors are the theme. A 6 foot artificial waterfall with live bamboo fills the lobby. Gold and white Japanese carp lazily swim in the huge basin. A gold-plated elder sign is mounted unobtrusively behind the cascading water. Practically no one is on this floor except those with the eye and mouth symbols on their clothes. Doctor Yamaguchi leads the group to the rare collections room.

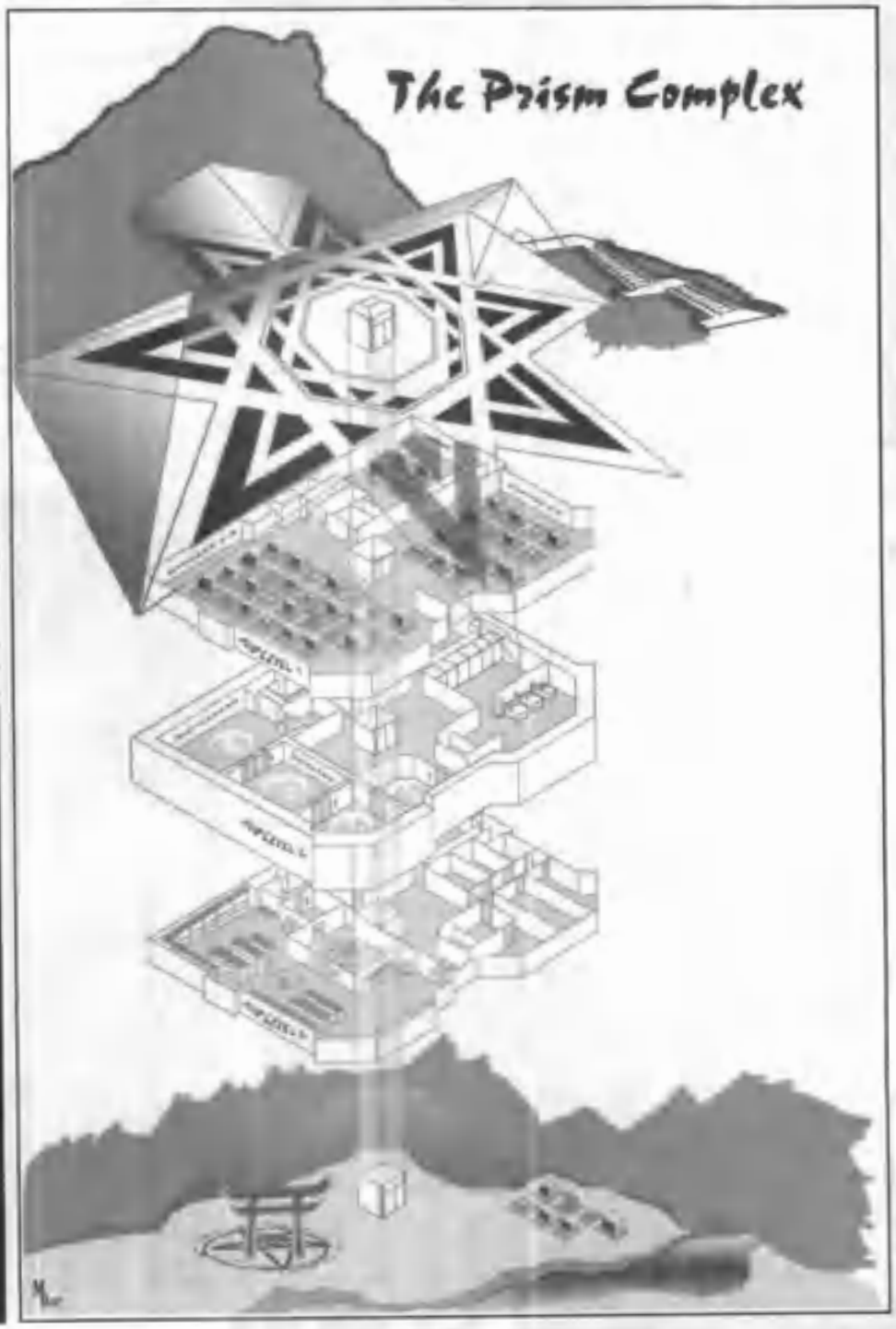
That which is Forbidden

Without further delay, the Doctor walks over to a shelf, slides a heavy metal container from it and says, "This is my problem and my curse. Please look at it."

Upon closer examination, the container is a titanium courier case. The investigators can choose to open the container. Encased within grey foam carefully cut to fit, is an ancient book of some sort.

The keeper should describe the book as follows:

> Black leather wicked from some reptilian creature is the cover of this 18" by 18" and 3" thick tome. Two bamboo slats reinforce the spine. Opening the book reveals the first page and a beautifully hand illuminated illustration: A gruesome



Levels in the Prism Temple

The headquarters in Kyoto features four sub-levels where the most secret rituals, experiments, and artifacts are hidden. All levels are constructed of reinforced concrete able to withstand a direct Tomahawk missile strike.

The first sub-level is a storage facility for enough supplies to weather a five-year holocaust.

The second floor of the sub-basement contains biotech and chemical labs for the production of nerve gas and bio-toxins, as well as providing for storage of the end products. These rooms are hermetically sealed with the same fail-safes as in governmental facilities.

The third sub-level, protected by voice-print secured doors requiring the recitation of key doctrine chants, is a treasury of the most rarified of occult artifacts as well as the private meeting rooms and accommodations for the elite of this cult.

The fourth sub-level is only accessible by the Mouths of the Buddha. It leads to a vast subterranean chamber where a massive volcanic chasm opens in the floor. Red-hot magma flows hundreds of feet below. It is here where the darkest rituals are performed by the cult. Incidentally, this is also where the cult disposes of dissenters, scientific mishaps, and the occasional new investigator.

skeleton sitting in meditation upon a jet black lotus blossom. Flipping through the brittle parchment pages releases a tangy yet musty smell that wafts through the room. The entire book is hand illustrated with whole blocks of text colored in dark reds, greens, browns, and purples. A spidery script, not Japanese, not Latin, but somehow familiar . . . an inaudible low hum can be felt in the bones near the tome.

An Education roll will reveal that the book is written in is Tibetan.

When the investigators finish examining the book and query the doctor, he will give the back story:

It is an illuminated eighteenth-century edition of the *Kinki Kyōten*, the infamous *Forbidden Sutra* crafted by the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus in its Tibetan Monastery two hundred years ago.

(Keepers who want to embellish and add more detail or back history about the original purpose of the Mythos tome *Kinki Kyōten* can consult the book's entry on pages 123–125.)

When Doctor Yamaguchi is satisfied the investigators believe the article is genuine, he will begin to speak on his plight.

Character Assassination

Just as the good doctor begins to tell his tale, the forgotten Ms. Uragi, dressed in shimmering green robes, launches across the room screaming "traitor!" (In Japanese, hangyakusha = treasonous.) A small tanto dagger gleaming in her hand forms a perfect arc. Her eye gleams with deadly intent as she tries to attack Doctor Yamaguchi.

The keeper can run this on a round by round basis to allow the investigators to intercede or just let events run their course with one important constraint: the doctor must not be slain.

If the investigators get involved, Ms. Uragi will attack any comers with her tanto. She appears quite able with it.

If the investigators are too slow or do not help, there is a brief struggle of feints and thrusts before the seemingly defenseless doctor produces a hypodermic needle which he deftly plunges into his attacker's eyeball. Uragi falls dead as the syringe fills with vitreous fluid. The man alternately giggles and shudders for a few seconds after the act.

Keepers might want to do a 1D2 Sanity check for witnesses of this savage counterattack.

Spellbound

If both parties live, the group is not out of the fire yet. Ms. Uragi will refuse to speak but instead begin chanting in a strange tongue (Naacal). Unless the group can stop her from chanting eight complete times, a spell will begin to take shape in the room: the Chant of the Emerald Mantra (Contact Emerald Lama).

The Emerald Lama's Third Eye (75%)

Through the organic gem on its head, a three dimensional scene forms in a green mist. Witnesses must roll INT x5 or less each round to resist watching; failure means they are mesmerized. Victims become obsessed with the place or thing shown. The target is helpless against the embrace of the Lama. The misty scenes depict the true nature of Nirvana, Azathoth dancing with his court, the dying moments of the Buddha, the flight of the tengu from their dying world, visions of Shambhallah, Mystic Hair, Carcosa and others. Some scenes, such as Azathoth, may induce Sanity checks. SAN losses are 10% of normal (i.e. 1/1D10 SAN to see Azathoth in the Lama's third eye).

A green glow will light the room as a blackness, a void, takes shape hovering in the center of the glow. Ms. Uragi's chanting is joined by a distant chanting that becomes louder and louder, filling the room. within 1D4 rounds, a humanoid form cloaked in shimmering green robes manifests, its face hidden by a shadowy hood.

It is the keeper's option what this apparition of the Avatar of Hastur, The Emerald Lama, does. It can only use non-physical attacks upon the assembled group, the Third Eye attack being its most potent weapon. Particularly evil keepers might also make the Shimmering Green Robes a viable attack, sending the victim to a different dimension.

(For complete stats on the Emerald Lama, please consult pages 252–254.)

Infiltration

If the investigators can stop Ms. Uragi from killing the doctor and stop her from summoning the Emerald Lama (which would be *really* bad news for the players) Doctor Yamaguchi will divulge the big ugly secret Ms. Uragi was working so hard to silence.

The Warning

The doctor solemnly informs the group that what they are about to hear will change their lives forever. There can be no going back to the way things were once they possess this knowledge. (Partially because the Dugpas will never leave them alone again once they know the investigators are aware of their existence.) He is telling them this because he has no one else to trust and the investigators are outsiders so he doesn't fear them as much.

ASAHARA SHINYAMA AND DOCTOR YAMAGUCHI

Double Agent

The doctor explains that he doesn't and has never worked for Yotsubishi. He in fact is a member of another organization: the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus, the Dugpas, the Green Caps. They are an ancient order of puppet masters who always lurk behind the scenes. The doctor's master is the *Kuroi Bōzu*, the Black Monk.

Regrets

The doctor endured many weary years of lies and falsehoods doing his master's edicts, fearful for his life if he did not do as he was told. He worked in Yotsubishi under a cover identity for several years while he gathered information on their two ultra secret paranormal agencies: Project Yūrei and Yotsubishi Psi-Mech. He was moved to the Buddha's Tears to gain Asahara Shinyama's trust and he indurred into the deepest levels of his organization. But his exposure to Professor Makoto showed him there are still honest and pure people. By the time he was due to arrive in Kyoto, he revealed to the professor that he wanted to switch allegiances, to work for Yotsubishi and do something worthwhile. But no sooner had he arrived at Buddha's Tears than assassination attempts started. Although he could scarcely believe Makoto would sell him out to the Dugpas, he decided to go into hiding and cut all contract with Psi-Mech.

Brass Tacks

The doctor believes that the investigators are innocent, because they were used by Yotsubishi and the Dugpas to flush him out of hiding. He'll argue that the investigators have already been cut loose as a liability. ("Why do you think they brought in outsiders?") He tells them that Yotsubishi fully expects the team to perish in the compound. The team can trust him more than anyone else they've encountered so far.

He also spells out his original assignment to the investigators: to steal this Mythos tome, *Kinki Kyōten*, from the compound and deliver it to the Black Monk to ship it back to its home in Tibet after an absence of over a hundred years.

Doctor Yamaguchi offers to make a deal with the investigators. In exchange for safe passage out of the country (possibly to the United States or the United Kingdom), he will give the tome to the investigators in payment.

If the investigators agree to bargain with Doctor Yamaguchi, they might also try to squeeze some information about the Dugpa and Yotsubishi organizations. The doctor may be reluctant, but he can give them names, structures, and aims. After all, he reasons, the more the investigators know, the deeper in trouble they are. The Dugpas do not like leaks and tend to plug them—literally.

The BIG PLAN

The doctor suggests a shaky plan. Tonight at midnight Asahara Shinyama will perform a grand summoning rite in the fourth sub-level on this, the Full Equinox. All of the Hands, Eyes and Mouths of Buddha's Tears are expected to attend. The doctor must attend or Shinyama will know something is amiss. This is a perfect chance for their group to escape because all of the leadership will be in one place and no one will be patrolling the compound. Slipping out with the tome should prove no problem.

If the investigators don't trust him and decide to leave earlier—like now—they are on their own and the doctor will keep the Mythos tome. They must try to escape the Prism Temple on their own and get out of the compound.

If the investigators trust him, he will get tabards with mouth sigils on them. The only safe place for the investigators to hide for any length of time is on the fourth sub-level. It is the one location where there are no patrols or other cult members for investigators to blunder into. Only high-ranking members of the cult can get down there so the player characters will be safe. They must wait eight hours for the ceremony. The doctor instructs them to wait for his signal, a diversion, and they will escape together.

Waiting

The investigators are secreted down into the fourth sub-level and the doctor asks them to hide behind shipping crates stored about one hundred feet from the elevator doors.

(The crates, well away from the bubbling hot magma chasm, present a linear path to the elevator—though the straight path gets uncomfortably close to the chasm.)

The doctor gives the investigators the metal case with the *Kinki Kyōten* for safekeeping to further convince them his intentions are honest. (Yes, the tome is in the case.)

Doubts

At this point, the investigators might be rightly wondering if this is some sort of trap. After all, do they really buy all that tripe the doctor told them? It seems a little too good to be true. (And did you see the way he stuck Uragi in the eyeball? Man! Disgusting!)

The keeper might want to play these doubts up while the group waits in the stuffy and hot chamber. Soon, however, a point of no return approaches as the elite members of the Buddha's Tears cult file in for the ceremony in ritual robes.

The keeper can take the cheap thrill and have all the players' fears about betrayal come to fruition—or not.

The Grand Summoning Rite

Soon the two dozen assembled cultists begin to form a semicircle around the great bubbling fissure of magma. All are in identical robes, all hold a staff ending in a large red gem, and all have a wooden Buddhist rosary on their wrist.

Asahara Shinyama comes into view as the blind old man slowly walks from the elevator talking with . . . Doctor Yamaguchi!

(The investigators are thinking, "Damn, I knew it!" ... *Got ya!*)

They take their place in the semicircle, Asahara in the very center. (The investigators remain safely unrevealed.)

The keeper should read this passage or describe some variant:

> *The ritual begins with a low murmur from the cultists. The rosary beads on the high priests' wrists glow a pulsating blue. The dim red hue of the underground cavern wanes as a flickering green welli up from the chasm. Dancing with their orange and red cousins, more and more flames turn green and the chamber seems to pressurize. Soon, a dull roar churns and whines to a screech like a monstrous jet engine. A column of green flame bursts from the magma fissure with such force that it blows most of the summoners back and knocks several on their backs. There are several surprised screams by the assembled group. The column of green flame continues to grow in size. A malevolence fills the hot, parched air. This is not what they expected.*

The doctor has performed a substitution, and quite a "diversion." What the summoners have brought to visit is the Outer God Tulzscha.

Chaos

The keeper may want to run this scene round-by-round. The atmosphere is one of pandemonium, necessitating split-second reactions to

THE GRAND SUMMONING RITE

get to safety as fast as possible. Don't allow the players to discuss what to do. Time the players if need be; give them 15–20 seconds to state their actions. They must blurt out what they will do for the round to keep the pacing snappy and fast. If they want to know distances or surrounding threats, then their investigators are evaluating and standing still in the scene.

When the scene begins, the Outer God is 70 feet away from the investigators' hiding place and much much closer to the summoners. Here are some events that occur as things unravel:

- The Outer God sends out a fiery gout of flame and ages a cultist to an old man.
- Asahara stands 60 feet from the Outer God with his hands outstretched. He is chanting a spell. Glowing white orbs flow from the pulsating Buddhist rosaries of the other priests and into Asahara.
- By the time the round starts, Doctor Yamaguchi is already 60 feet from the Outer God and accelerating toward the elevator. A glassy look mars his face (possible total SAN loss).
- One fleeing "Mouth" falls and breaks the rosary on his wrist. The beads scatter as dozens of white orbs swarm from the beads. Angry moans emanate from the white orbs, which swarm the fallen man. He screams. Angry yūrei, freed from the prayer beads, begin swarming the cavern.

The investigators have a task on their hands:

- A straight line dash to the elevators puts them in the 40' danger zone of the Outer God for one round, marginally in the 50' zone for 1/2 round on either side. It takes two rounds to get to the elevator.
- The slower, safer route of the cavern perimeter will take 5 rounds. Fleeing summoners will clog the elevator. The longer the players take to exit, the greater the chance they will have to roll additional Sanity checks. (You did roll for the Outer God, didn't you?)

The Rush

Meeting the unhinged doctor in the elevator, the investigators must dash through the underground complex with their stolen loot. Making it to the surface is the first priority. At level one, investigators must hurriedly find the reverse way back out of the labyrinth.

ASAHARA SHINYAMA, Age 75, Charismatic Cult Leader of Buddha's Tears

STR 08	CON 10	SIZ 10	INT 18	POW 23
DEX 10	APP 07	EDU 22	SAN 0	HP 10

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Katana Swordcane 35%, damage 1D10.

Spells: Alter Weather, Bind Kitsune (Bind Loup-Garou), Cloud Memory, Command Ghost, Contact Kappa*, Contact Kitsune*, Contact Deity/Aku-Shin Kage*, Contact Emerald Lama*, Dominate, Deflect Harm, Enchant Cane, Summon Oni*, Thunder of Susano-Wo (Create Fetch Stick).

*See "A Japanese Grimoire," pages 136–143, for more information.

Skills: Astronomy 35%, Bargain 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 33%, Credit Rating 80%, Cultural Etiquette 55%, Fast Talk 80%, Hide 20%, History 35%, Lore (Buddhism) 78%, Martial Arts (Kendo) 35%, Meditation 55%, Navigate 65%, Own Language 92%, Occult 60%, Organize Cult 75%, Persuade 88%, Psychology 45%, Sneak 20%.

TULZSCHA, Outer God, The Green Flame

STR 60	CON 36	SIZ 78	INT 15	POW 15
DEX 12				HP 57

Damage Bonus: as energy, not applicable.

Weapons: Flame Gout 80%, Damage Special*

**Effective at 50 feet or less; 1 attack per round. The gout of green fireballs may be dodged. With a successful attack, the target ages 2D10 years. The target needs CON x5 and POW x5 rolls on D100, with the losses expressed as 1/1D6 CON and 1/1D6 POW respectively. A second POW x5 roll is necessary as well; failing it, roll 1D6: 1–2=lose 1 STR, 3–4=lose 1 DEX, 5–6=lose 1 APP.*

Armor: None, but immune to impaling weapons and to heat, cold, acid, and electricity. Explosives and all other physical attacks do minimum damage. Magic affects it normally, but Tulzscha can only be driven away by being reduced to 0 hit points.

Spells: as the keeper wishes.

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D20 Sanity points to see Tulzscha.

Black Death

Upon reaching the surface, the group should make a mad dash for the road and the gate beyond. The compound is surrounded by impenetrable forest.

At some point, waiting for the investigators are two hooded figures in green robes and a strange heavily muscled bald Japanese man. He has a red tan and wears scorched black robes. His eyes briefly flare red.

The Road Less Traveled

There are three paths the keeper can take with this final scene:

1. ***Die, traitor!***—The Black Monk moves at superhuman speed and snaps the doctor's neck like a chicken's, cold-bloodedly murdering him in front of the investigators. He takes the stolen tome from the investigators and says two words, "Ask Makoto." He and his two followers leave. (Makoto actually did not betray the investigators or Yamaguchi, but the investigators don't know that; the Black Monk is simply sowing distrust and chaos.)

2. ***Bye bye, fools!***—The Black Monk and his team wait as the doctor takes his place at his master's side. They both cackle as the two henchmen take the case with the tome. Any resistance will start a battle between the investigators and the Dugpas. The Green Caps will be merciful and only break a few limbs.

3. ***Safe passage***—The group will escape scot free and hopefully keep true to their promise get the doctor to safety. The book is the investigators' to do with as they wish, but they have the Green Caps forever as nemeses.

Wrapping things up

Upon returning to Yotsubishi Entertainment Japan, the investigators find the entire building to be empty and closed. None of the staff they met acknowledge that they know the investigators. They are unable to get into Psi-Mech even with Doctor Yamaguchi. There is no evidence they ever were hired by Yotsubishi on their corporate records. The player characters are on their own.

There *is* that group called Third Eye Agency that might help out.

Rewards

If the investigators understand that Ms. Uragi was about to perform a summoning and they stop her, award the investigators 1 Sanity point. If the investigators save Ms. Uragi's life and take her along, award them 1D3 Sanity points. If they help kill her, charge them 1D3 Sanity.

If the investigators do gather evidence enough to indict Mappo Media and Buddha's Tears and they go to the media or the police, award them 1D6 Sanity points. Mappo Media products will be pulled from shelves and Yotsubishi cleared in the scandal, but the police will not take any action against the cult on the word of some "outsiders."

Samples of the sarin or a paper trail to the compound's manufacture of it will elicit a raid on the compound and another 1D6 Sanity award as the cult will be exposed and put under public scrutiny.

If the investigators undertake the secondary mission to save Doctor Yamaguchi and fully succeed in getting him safely away, award them 1D6+1 points.

If circumstances allow it, a copy of the *Kinki Kyoten* will be in the investigators' hands. The small accordion-style booklet is the Mythos tome, the *Doctrine of Buddha's Tears* and is also useful for "research" on the Mythos.

The debit cards still have credit on them for a day or two until Yotsubishi realizes the investigators survived. Investigators can drain around ¥1,000,000 yen from the lot of them ($10,000 U.S. total) before they are cancelled. Enough for the group to fly home or use for some other purpose.

Yotsubishi will turn a deaf ear to any pleas for aid, but the keepers might allow the investigators to form a connection with Professor Makoto. This can allow the player characters to work for or be associated with Project Yûrei and Psi-Mech if they and the keeper desire it.

KAGE-HOSHI BOZU, The Black Monk, Age 468, Tainted Taoist Immortal, Servant of the Emerald Lama

STR 20	CON 22	SIZ 17	INT 19	POW 28
DEX 12	APP 07	EDU 15	SAN 0	HP 20

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: none.

Armor: none, but the Black Monk has the ability to recover from mortal wounds on up to 70% of his body (i.e., 14 hit points), recovering all damage in 1D10 rounds.

Skills: Bargain 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 67%, Fast Talk 80%, Hide 90%, Martial Arts (Aikidô) 90%, Meditation 94%, History 75%, Navigate 95%, Occult 91%, Own Language 92%, Persuade 96%, Psychology 45%, Sneak 70%, Spot Hidden 75%, Track 60%.

Spells: Army of Hell*, Chasm to Hell*, Cleanse Ignorance (Curse of Darkness), Contact Deity/Nyarlathotep, Call/Dismiss Aku-Shin Kage*, Contact Deity/Emerald Lama*, Create Hungry Ghost*, Create Yôkai*, Harmony of Oneness (Flesh Ward), Heilgate*, Scry The Cold Hells/Hot Hells*, Summon/Bind Hungry Ghost*, Summon/Bind Oni*, Summon/Bind Yôkai*, Thunder of Susano-Wo (Create Fetch Stick), Escape the Grasp of Enma (Create Self Ward), Wisdom of Emperors (Chant of Thoth).

*See "A Japanese Grimoire," pages 136–143, for more information.

The Yonaguni Monuments

Presented here is the barest of information to run a scenario based upon events in the "Yonaguni Monuments" story on pages 10–24. Ideal for beginning investigators and those new to the *Cthulhu Japan* setting, three or more investigators are recommended. In larger groups of investigators, player characters may take the place of non-essential non-player characters provided in the scenario such as Kenji Ohasa, Ishii Moritani, or some of Professor Hiro Fuji's research staff. A mixed group of foreign and Japanese investigators is encouraged. For foreign investigators, both reading and speaking the Japanese language presents obstacles. A suggested important theme in this scenario is the difference between Japanese and Western culture: polite bows and smiles for a non-confrontational "no," a set hierarchical way of doing things, or the heavy sense of obligation for and given. This scenario is best played with a cliffhanger atmosphere; session-ending scenes include the smuggler attack, the start of the kappa encounter, or the sealing of the inner chamber. The events of Yonaguni occur in the present day but can be adapted easily to other eras.

Two variants of the Mythos tome, the *Shinwa Taizen*, are introduced as well as the jade Gyoku, which behave in concert as an enormous protective seal on the dimensional portal holding the Ryûjin. Refer to page 155, which lists the full powers of the Gyoku.

Keeper Information

The scenario can begin by invitation from one of three parties. If the keeper chooses Dr. Sharpley, the scenario begins stateside when he requests the expertise of the investigators in a research outing. Alternatively, Hasafumi requests the investigators come to Tokyo and meet him at Todai about an urgent discovery. If Professor Fuji is chosen, he requests they meet at Todai also but only to delay their involvement while he assembles a research team in Okinawa. Only with persistence will Fuji allow company.

The first stage of the adventure is the challenge of actually getting to the underwater ruins at Yonaguni-Jima in Okinawa Prefecture, Japan. The second stage of the story unfolds when the investigators' contact meets them in Okinawa and discloses the urgency for a research mission. The third stage of the scenario involves outfitting the research vessel, deciphering the Mythos data, and the race to get to the underwater site. The final part of the scenario involves diving to the underwater ruin site and entering the outer and inner chambers of the ancient Muvian Ziggurat. An important consideration for the keeper is the high potential for lethality in this last stage of the scenario. Note that certain parts of this scenario are very action-oriented and key non-player characters perform pivotal actions that act as a catalyst for story development. If these characters are somehow prevented from performing their actions, it is suggested that the keeper choose another character or even an investigator to fulfill the role and keep the story moving. (This would also be helpful as there is always the possibility the story is familiar to the players.)

Pairing up with Fuji

Professor Hiro Fuji is very traditional in his views and with expertise in the field of geology, he firmly holds that the "ruins" are actually natural structures caused by volcanism. His team of fifteen researchers has a university-chartered ship, ten trained scuba divers (actually hired Yakuza muscle), and full grant funding from Todai University to prove his theory. Additional funding and the services of Dragon Lord "advisors" disguised as Yakuza security guards have been provided by the Oyabun, who understands the significance of the ruins and desires to awaken its slumbering inhabitants. The research team's base of operations is Ryukyu University *(Ryudai)* in Okinawa's capital city, Naha.

Pairing up with Hasafumi or Sharpley

Two scholars lead the second research team: Professor Jiro Hasafumi, an unconventional field archeologist, and his co-researcher from the States, Dr. Clark Sharpley. Hasafumi has managed limited funding for his pet project but not without hardship and great cost to his professional reputation. Putting considerable personal resources into the endeavor, the team has a small lab at a decommissioned U.S. military base on Yonaguni Island. For fieldwork, Hasafumi has leased a rusting fishing trawler and equipped it for research work, including seabed sonar and deep-sea diving gear. Hasafumi's staff consists of three dedicated graduate students: Emi Ochi, Ishii Moritani and Kenji Ohasa.

Player Information

Investigators may have read the occasional newspaper or magazine story about the amazing find of underwater temples and structures off the coast of Okinawa in recent months. The scenario begins when the investigators receive a communiqué from a researcher involved with the underwater ruins at Yonaguni. He invites them to join the expedition based upon the much needed expertise they can bring to the venture. Alternately, the investigators could be distant friends or acquaintances of the researchers from past associations in other scenarios.

Todai

In the communiqué, investigators are directed to meet the researcher for a briefing in his departmental offices at Todai, Tokyo University. They are free to explore the campus under the limitations of visiting scholars. See pages 334–342 for details on the campus. With a successful Idea roll, one of the investigators may hit upon the idea of using the Todai public libraries to find news clippings on the underwater ruins in Okinawa as well as the publications and career profile of their contact at Todai.

Prof. Fuji

If Todai Staff Archeologist Hiro Fuji contacted the investigators, he will meet with the investigators in his office in the Archeology Department with a warm welcome and offer a tour of the Todai campus and Tokyo city. His office is excessively neat and its walls are decorated with several ancient Noh as well as tribal Jomôn Period clay masks. In this first meeting he evades any questions that deal with the business of the expedition or even its aims. (This is a common Japanese custom of establishing social ties before getting to brass tacks and should not unduly alarm or raise suspicions of the investigators.) On the other hand, Fuji is quietly gauging just how much the investigators know about the underwater ruins. Whether the investigators agree to a tour of the campus or not, Fuji will nevertheless insist they

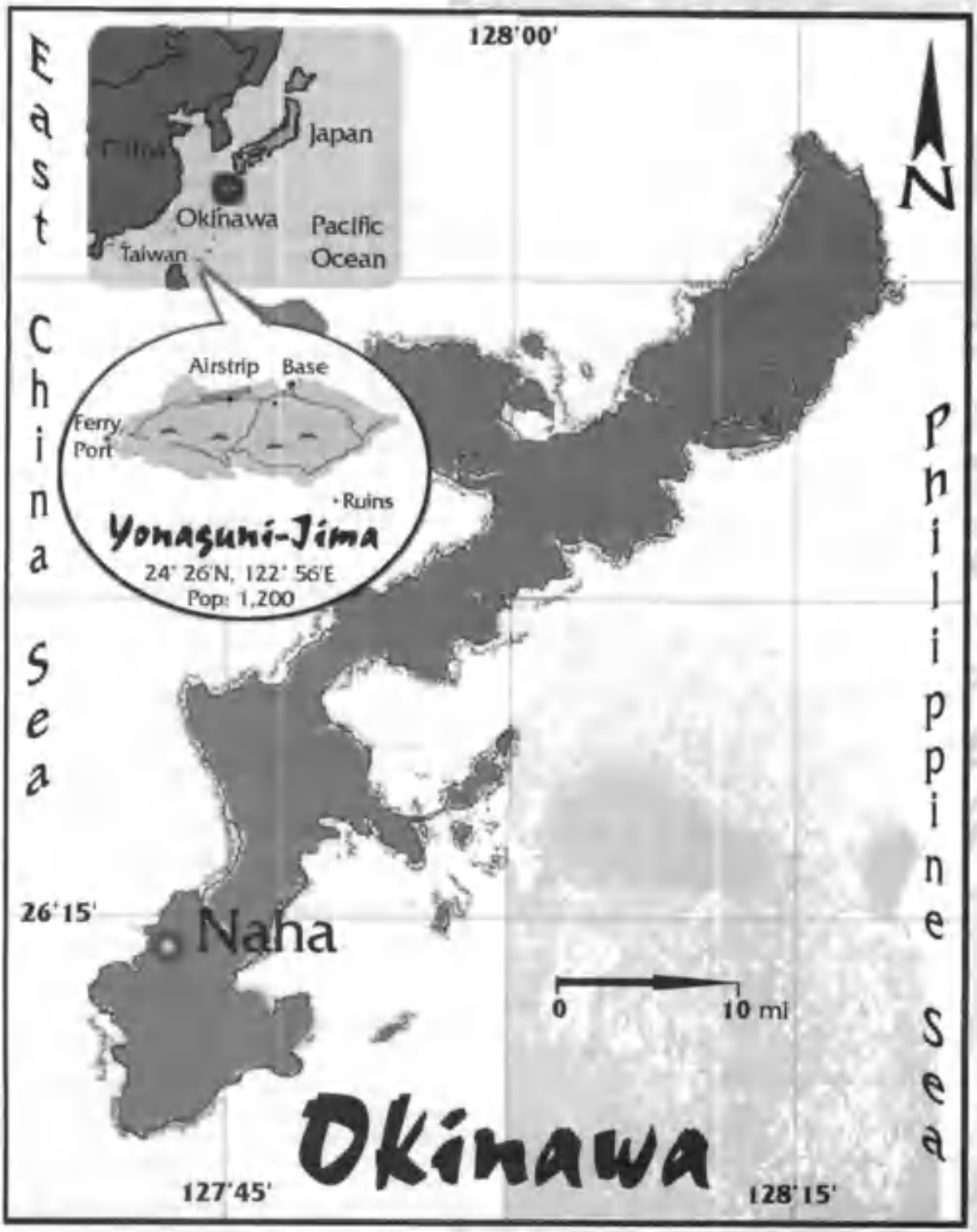
take a few days to settle in. Fuji is adamant he will meet them a second time and answer all of their questions about the expedition after they have had a chance to become acclimated with Tokyo. (As the capital of Japan since the 1870s, Tokyo is a good place to set the mood and theme of the Japanese era setting for the players.)

Prof. Hasafumi/Sharpley

If Todai Staff Archeologist Jiro Hasafumi or Dr. Sharpley initially contacted the investigators, they will find that their contacts are neither at the airport nor at Todai. Asking around at Todai they will be directed to Prof. Fuji's office where the keeper can run the encounter described above. The chief difference is that Fuji will also try to milk the investigators on what his rivals have revealed to the investigators.

The Gilded Cage

While the investigators at first appear openly invited and warmly welcomed, they find that they are actually completely on their own: the Todai school administration will provide no help or information. A couple of days may pass before the investigators come to the realization



that they are being diverted or delayed by a "helpful" and exceedingly polite school faculty.

Breaking into Fuji's office

If the investigators were contacted by Fuji, they may not know where to go next. An Idea roll by a player character might suggest the dubious prospect of breaking into Fuji's office for further information. A keeper might encourage players to roleplay the breaking and entering of the office using the skills Computer Use, Listen, Locksmith, Sneak and Spot Hidden. (If the investigators make a critical failure on a skill roll, there is the possibility that the campus police may arrive on the scene.)

If they break into Fuji's office, investigators will find a personal schedule on the computer (someone will have to crack the password) indicating a travel itinerary to Okinawa. Around the office, the investigators will find departmental requisitions for research time on the *Todai Maru*, a vessel registered with the Tokyo Port Authority; lease of the *Todai-Chan*, a robotic submersible from the Japan Marine Science and Technology Center (JAMSTEC); receipt for two dozen sets of scuba equipment; and a Todai Library receipt for satellite maps of the ocean floor near Yonaguni-Jima. (Note that a proficiency in Japanese language of 51 percentiles or higher is required to read Fuji's documents as they contain legal and technical terms.) If the telephone recorder is played back, the majority of messages are from faculty or students, but there is a peculiar recording by a baritone voice (in Japanese) referring to an arrangement of "protection" on its way to Ryudai to meet with Fuji.

Getting to Okinawa

Once the investigators figure out the need to go to Yonaguni, they must arrange transportation. The main airport in Tokyo is Narita International Airport (NRT), about an hour commute by train and located in the rural outskirts of the city. At Narita, they can charter a Japan Airlines (JAL) flight to journey 930 miles south to Okinawa Airport (OKA) in Naha. En route, the investigators should get a taste of the efficient and cramped sterility of Japanese trains and planes (Transportation prices are in "Costs and Equipment" on page 83.)

Serpent Onboard

On the long trip to Naha, Okinawa, the keeper may wish to subject one or more investigators to the "hallucination" Sharpley experiences in the story. (This is especially appropriate for investigators with Channel Spirit, Clairvoyance, Meditation, or Psychometry.) In the first class seating of the main or airplane the investigators are traveling in, they will get a glimpse of an astral serpent, described on pages 248–250. (The etheric essence of a serpent person astrally projecting and possessing a rich businessman or politician. This astral serpent appears as a ghostly 8' tall serpent person superimposed over the human host's body.) Witnessing the astral serpent should only occur for a second or so; it does not matter if the investigator has any psychic ability for they will still see the etheric creature in this episode. (The keeper may wish to do a 0/1D6 Sanity roll for those who witness the astral serpent.) After the encounter, if an investigator approaches the possessed man, he seems perfectly normal and surprised at their interruption.

The Earthquake

A 7.6 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter at the Yonaguni underwater ziggurat cracks open an entrance into the structure's hidden chambers. The earthquake can be mentioned over the plane P.A. system during the captain's announcements. Optionally, the earthquake can strike a few minutes after landing at Okinawa Airport in Naha as the investigators disembark from the airplane onto the tarmac.

Meeting up in Okinawa

Once the investigators arrive at Okinawa Airport, they will need to charter a Cessna prop plane to island-hop to Yonaguni Jima. If the investigators' contact is Hasafumi or Sharpley, then Hasafumi will be waiting in a worn out U.S. jeep at the landing strip on Yonaguni Island. His demeanor will be friendly as he drives them to the old U.S. naval base. It is here that Hasafumi will introduce the investigators for the first time to Emi Ochi (who will insist all conversations take place in Japanese only), Kenji Ohasa and Dr. Clark Sharpley (always protectively clutching a leather satchel to his person). Ishii Moritani, the dive specialist, is in town gathering supplies.

At this point, Dr. Sharpley takes over the conversation and discusses the importance of these underwater ruins: they contain evidence of an ancient pre-human civilization once spanning the Earth. Hasafumi and his staff will look visibly pale as the topic comes up. Sharpley proceeds to unroll highly polished thin copper scrolls on the bare metal bench. Written in seventh century Kobú Court Japanese, these ten copper sheets are a partial copy of the *Shinnin Taizen*, a primordial codex detailing the true Muvian origins of the Japanese people as well as their long coexistence and intermingling with the serpent people. The investigators will have three days to study the monolith fragments, the copper sheets of the *Shinnin Taizen*, and discuss plans and theories with the research team as it will take that long to prepare the ship for the expedition. Ishii Moritani arrives late the first night with dive supplies such as regulators and fresh oxygen tanks. On the third night, Sharpley will quietly depart to hire a ship captain. The investigators may try to shadow him; if they do, they will see Sharpley enter a rundown ramen noodle shack and hire Captain Kenta, a man of pure Ainu stock. (The keeper may optionally choose to allow one or two investigators to accompany Sharpley's errand to hire a ship captain and help him negotiate a fee. The fishermen captains who frequent this ramen shop speak in a very thick colloquial dialect difficult for even a native Japanese investigator; any interaction should be roleplayed humorously.)

If, on the other hand, the keeper has chosen Fuji as the scenario contact, the investigators do not need to take a charter plane but instead must navigate alone through Naha, the capital city of Okinawa Prefecture, to the Ryudai Campus. There, they will find Fuji in the Ryudai Archeology Department. Fuji will show grudging respect for the investigators in getting this far; he allows the investigators to join his research team without too much resistance. Note that Fuji will only tell the investigators the barest of essentials about the expedition. He will keep his ultimate plans secret if at all possible.

The Todai Maru

If the investigators are allied with Fuji, he will accompany them in an open K-Truck. One of Fuji's hired security guards (a Yakuza thug in plain clothes as well as a Dragon Lord member) drives the passengers from Ryudai down to Naha Port. Berthed at the dock is a pristine white, state-of-the-art, multi-billion yen research vessel named the *Todai Maru*. Less than a year old, the ship is equipped with microwave and radar towers, high-resolution sonar, GPS tracking, a mobile lab, and spacious cabins for a crew of 30. On the massive rear deck is the *Todai-Chan*, a yellow unmanned submersible with a maximum dive depth of 6,500 feet. Two massive boom cranes on deck operate the submersible. Manning the *Todai Maru* are fifteen researchers and ten trained scuba divers. The divers are hired Yakuza "security guards" who are actually Dragon Lords ragging along to

ensure their secondary mission is successful: the awakening of the Great Old One, the Ryūjin. Once Fuji and the player characters are aboard, the fully provisioned ship gets underway. It will take three days to reach Yonaguni Island. The atmosphere should be tense and uncooperative between the investigators and Fuji's team; they should get the distinct impression that they are outsiders.

The Fishing Trawler

Early in the morning of the fourth day, Hasafumi and the investigators who accompany his team take the old jeep and haul equipment to the old naval dock where a converted fishing trawler is berthed. The ship is a sorry sight; the only non-rusting features are the two bright red 50' cranes originally used for net fishing. As the investigators arrive at the ship, the diesel engine pops, rattles and dies as black smoke belches from the stacks. A small 10' long motorized aluminum boat arrives at the pier with three Ainu men: Captain Kenta, his son Kumu and his cousin. Sharpley haggles price over this unexpected third deck hand (Investigators might help with Fast Talk and Bargain). Afterwards, upon reaching agreement, the captain and his two deck hands immediately begin to work on the old diesel engine, freely shouting frustrated insults at the engine in Japanese. It will still take 1D6 hours to properly fix it. If the investigators offer, the keeper may allow those with Mechanical Repair to help. For others less busy, a successful Spot Hidden roll while looking out of the trawler ports into the dark beneath the pier will reveal strange pairs of red glowing dots floating in the water. (These are the reflecting eyes of kappa.)

Repaired, the trawler gets underway but not without a bone jarring screech as the entire starboard side of the hull drags along the side of the dock. (The keeper may call for a DEX roll for player characters to stay on their feet; a severe failure means they go overboard.) The collision leaves a long metal gash that rubs out the name of the ship. The superstitious captain holds it to be a very bad omen. It will take about two hours to reach the underwater ziggurats. However, once there, the news is disappointing; because the earthquake stirred the seabed, an entire day of circular sonar sweeps is required to re-map the ocean floor at the ruin site.

The Dream

Those who fall asleep while in a twenty-mile proximity of the Yonaguni underwater ruins suffer a severely disturbing dream (See pages 16 and 18–19 of the "Yonaguni Monuments" story for a vivid example). The keeper might choose to have the players roleplay out the dream, as it is so vivid as to be almost "real." The dream begins mundanely in the dreamer's hometown with friends or loved ones, but suddenly the air becomes cold, the sky dark. At first in a whisper, is the chant of *"om ryūjin mappo hum."* Impossibly far off in the distance, a long undulating speck flies in the sky. As it meanders closer, weaving through skyscrapers or mountains, the chanting also becomes louder and more threatening. As the flying form gets closer, it becomes obvious that this thing is impossibly huge—almost 1,000 feet long. It is the Mappo no Ryūjin (Further description of this Great Old One can be found on pages 255–257). Ghostlike, the Ryūjin phases through buildings and structures. Just before the dream ends, one of the Ryūjin's "hairs," digestive pseudopod tendrils, will engulf one or several of the dreamer's loved ones and dissolve them horribly before the dreamer's eyes. This ends the dream. Note that if the dream is interrupted at any point, it will resume where it left off when the person returns to sleep. (The keeper may choose to roll a 0/1D4 SAN check for those who experience the dream. The awakened characters will be restless and high strung as the sleep is fitful. A CON x5 check to stay awake is required for those who do not wish to dream.)

Triad Smugglers Attack

In the waters surrounding the ruins, both the *Todai Maru* and the fishing trawler come under attack. With Okinawa only sixty miles from Taiwan, and Yonaguni Island even closer, the research ships are prime targets for raiders. The attackers may be smuggling stolen goods, opium, illegal immigrants into Japan, protecting a sunken ship, or even engaging in open piracy on ships in the area.

Smuggler's Ship

A converted Chinese military clipper with Taiwanese registry, this ship can easily outrun the *Todai Maru* or the fishing trawler. The deck is manned by twenty Chinese Triad contraband runners; the keeper should decide how much their numbers are reduced during their attack on the *Todai Maru*.

Ship Weapons: Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG). Damage 3D6 in 2 yard radius, Base Chance 25%, Base Range 20, Attacks per round 1/3, HP Resisting Attack 12, Malfunctions on 99-00 (Smugglers only have two grenades). Mounted on the rear deck is a Russian GSH-6-23M (9-A-768), a six-barrel gun used in Russian airplanes; Damage 2D8, Base Chance 15%, Base Range 150 yards, Attacks Per Round burst, Bullets in belt 200, HP Resisting Attack 11, Malfunctions on 00.

Chinese Triad Smugglers
Group of 20, use these stats for all (or devise own):

STR 12	CON 12	SIZ 13	INT 10	POW 10
DEX 12	APP 09	EDU 07	HP 13	SAN 75

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Chinese military issue MAK-90 semi-auto assault rifle (Chinese manufactured AK-47 variant), Base Chance 35%, Base Range 90 yards, Attacks per round 2 or burst, Bullets in Clip 30, HP resisting Attack 11, Malfunctions 92-00 (low quality manufacturing). Damage 2D6+1.
Uzi submachine Gun 45%, damage 1D10
Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D4+db

Skills: Conceal 56%, Disguise 45%, Fast Talk 55%, Law 25%, Fist/Punch 70%, Machinegun 30%, Own Language (Chinese-Cantonese), Persuade 15%, Pilot Ship 45%, Spot Hidden 40%, Swim 28%, Submachine Gun 45%.

The Todai Maru is Hit

Attacking under the cover of early evening, the smugglers hit the *Todai Maru* first due to its route from Naha. The smugglers fire an opening shot meant to cripple the *Todai Maru* by targeting her engine room with one of two RPG rounds (Those within 2 yards of the Engine room suffer 3D6 damage). With a ship three times the size of her attackers, the *Todai Maru* and its Yakuza "divers" should be able to repulse the raid, but not before the *Todai*'s engines are heavily damaged, the ship begins to take on water and 12 members of the crew are dead. Keepers should be reminded that guns are highly illegal in Japan; even gangsters are armed with swords or hunting rifles, as hand guns, not to mention assault rifles, are difficult to obtain even on the Japanese black market. The *Todai Maru* is at an obvious disadvantage, even with Yakuza onboard.

The Fishing Trawler is Hit

Later that night, the smugglers attack the fishing trawler as it performs its sonar sweeps. Shouting in Cantonese, they immediately open fire with MAK-90s while attempting to blind anyone on the trawler deck with a bright halogen spotlight. Sharpley, Captain Kenta, Ishii, Kenji

and others are shielded in the pilot's room on the control deck where Captain Kenta throttles the ship in an arc to escape. It will take those below deck 1 round to get topside, with a Luck roll needed to avoid being blinded for 1 round. With a Spot Hidden roll, pairs of strange glowing red lights floating in the water can be seen; these are kappa, hungrily observing.

Ramming Speed

In the course of this scene, Kunio, Captain Kenta's son, is hit by a spray of bullets in the pilot's room and begins to die.

Captain Kenta, in a fury of rage, screams "Pirates!" and jams the trawler to full throttle to ram the smuggler's clipper. (It takes only 1 round for the collision; keepers might want to make sure investigators aren't tossed overboard or crushed when the two ships collide. 1D8 smugglers are knocked overboard, some cling to the rails on the side of the hull and others are dazed for 1D3 rounds.) The smuggler captain runs to the deck mounted gun but is unable to free the debris of ropes and cables to use it. He calls for crew hands to help. During the 3 rounds the ships are locked together, 1D4 smugglers tie ropes to the mangled trawler's hoist to moor the two ships together and attempt to hop over. (At the keeper's option, several of the MAK-90s may have been tossed from the clipper onto the deck of the trawler after the collision.)

At the end of 3 rounds, Captain Kenta puts the trawler in full reverse. With an ear-piercing groan, the boom of the trawler's 50-foot hoist is ripped off, taking 1D6 smugglers beneath the waves as the trawler rapidly withdraws from the scene. The smuggler's clipper begins to sink and list. The surviving smugglers are in a panic; several groups struggle to inflate life rafts.

Kappa

(At this point, an Idea roll by investigators will merit the observation that not one single person thrown overboard is treading water or above the waves. A Spot Hidden roll will notice the same strange red pairs of glowing dots floating in the water in addition to strange shadowy forms near the clipper hull.)

As the trawler pulls away, the smuggler clipper begins to visibly list 30 degrees as it takes on water. 5D6 shadowy bipedal shapes begin to crawl up every side of the hull onto the deck of the clipper. The only feature visible at first are glowing red eyes. If a spotlight is shone upon the creatures, they will be plainly seen as kappa. (Note that if investigators shine light at the kappa attacking the clipper, fire upon the creatures or otherwise draw attention to the escaping trawler, at the keeper's option, 1D6 kappa will break off to pursue the trawler and attack the investigators.) Light hitting the creatures will force their chameleon-like skin into its neutral sickly green color; otherwise, coloration will be spotted olive or mimic the background of the clipper as much as possible. Other than the red eyes, the kappa will be extremely hard to discern from a distance. The kappa swarm the smugglers, mauling, torturing, gutting and feeding on the open wounds. Other victims will be dragged screaming and struggling into the water to disappear beneath the waves. (Witnesses to this spectacle must make a 0/1D6 SAN check. If the scene becomes exceptionally gruesome, keepers may opt for a more drastic SAN check.) After 1D8 rounds Captain Kenta will successfully swing the trawler around and depart the scene as fast as possible.

Hooking up with the Rival Research Vessel

Two hours later, the fishing trawler spots a pillar of smoke on the horizon; it is the crippled *Todai Maru* slowly taking on water. On deck are a dozen bodies covered in sheets, the engine room has a massive hole from a RPG blast, and bullet holes stitch large sections of the ship. Bilge pumps work overtime, pushing water out of the anchor holes.

The two research vessels pull alongside each other. Fuji emerges from the *Todai Maru's* lower decks. Half of his head is covered in bandages with his glasses worn on top. Of the Yakuza security guards, a few are visibly wounded, one even in an arm sling. Dressed in black, they all have sheathed katanas looped in their belts. As the trawler is moored to the *Todai Maru*, Fuji and his team board the trawler and both teams of researchers compare notes to decide upon a course of action.

True to Japanese culture, despite the rivalry, the most obvious course of action to the Japanese researchers is to pool resources and combine into one team. Among liabilities for the trawler is that most of its scientific equipment, including the sonar, is damaged. The trawler is, however, seaworthy unlike the *Todai Maru*. The newly formed team begins to grab anything of value from the *Todai Maru* and transfer it to the trawler. One of the first items, requiring the help of four people, will be the robotic submersible, the *Todai-Chan*, moved over via the trawler's remaining boom crane. Forty minutes later, the *Todai Maru* finally sinks.

(At the keeper's option, the investigators can race against the clock to recover as much equipment, charts, and perishables from the swamped lower decks of the *Todai Maru*. Do not tell the investigators how long they have, rather roll 5D6+15 to determine a new time in minutes before the ship sinks. There should, however, be at least enough time to transfer the submersible. Those stuck below decks when the ship finally sinks have only a 20% chance of surviving the undertow suction produced by the ship going under the waves. Those who jump from the deck have a higher chance: they must roll a successful Swim roll to fight the strong undertow of the sinking *Todai Maru*.)

The Dive

At the break of dawn, Kenji and Ishii prepare the dive gear while Hasafumi and Emi look over the submersible. Everyone looks pale and shaken as if they did not sleep. (If the investigators look into it, they may discover everyone had the same horrible dream.) The decision is made to break into two dive teams with monitoring personnel staying above. Captain Kenta is in mourning for his son and is of no help in the preparations. As everyone sits down to get into wetsuits, it becomes apparent to everyone that the security guards are in fact Yakuza as their entire bodies are covered in irezumo tattoos. They place wakizashi short swords or tanto daggers in the belts of their wetsuits. Sharpley nervously fumbles with something in his satchel and it falls out: it is a black jade Gyoku a little smaller than the size of an orange. (Only those looking Sharpley's direction will notice this as he quickly hides it in his wet suit.) Everyone appears nervous; even the Yakuza are kissing shrine charms while they suit up. The first dive team accompanies the submersible under the waves. Sharpley, Emi, Kenji, Fuji, Hasafumi and a Yakuza are in the second team. Each team is secured to a single harness attached to a clip on the belt to keep everyone together.

Each scuba suit has a full face mask with a voice activated two-way radio as well as two small halogen lamps on each side of the head for illumination. The tanks provide three hours of air and are not designed for deep sea diving. The entire outfit weighs 40 lbs. out of water.

The Yonaguni Ziggurat

The top of the temple is only thirty feet below the bottom of the ship and thickly encrusted with mundane sea life. The *Todai-Chan's* low light imaging leads the dive teams to the most likely entrance, a new fissure in the temple located near a massive man made trench at the base of the basalt structure.

The water is dark and murky due to the earthquake. Visibility is less than 15 feet. The massive lights on the front of the submersible extend this to 30 feet for those nearby. Light from the sun fades after a depth of 40 feet. Hasafumi recommends hopping down the massive blocks making up the temple-like giant stair steps because of the poor visibility.

The lower terraces of the ziggurat glow green from an unusual algae as high silt quickly reduces visibility to 2 feet. The seabed is 220 feet down. At the base of the ziggurat are several tons of shattered basalt blocks and a small newly made entrance into the ziggurat. Its depths are unlit but the quake-made tunnel is the only way into the bowels of the structure.

The irregular tunnel in the basalt block is roomy enough for a large man in scuba equipment to comfortably navigate but too small to admit the *Tōdai-Chan* submersible. The tunnel is 80 feet long, pitch black and ascends at a 45-degree angle. The end of the tunnel is a crack in the wall of a dry inner chamber.

The Outer Chamber

This square chamber is about 250 yards long by 250 yards wide. The ceiling is 25 feet up. This room is lighted by a dim green glow of unknown origin.

Deadly Air

While the outer and inner chambers are dry, the stagnant air contains poisonous vapors making it toxic to breathe. (Inhalation causes unconsciousness in 1D4 rounds and death in 1D8 rounds. Even if an oxygen mask is put back on within 1D4 rounds, the victim drops into unconsciousness and requires medical attention.)

The Oval Stasis Pods

Thousands of oval stasis pods line the slippery floor of the outer chamber in orderly rows. Within the pods are hibernating serpent men. Each is attired in the gold and green robes of a Mu-vian aristocrat and is bejeweled metal crowns, scepters and bracelets of gold, platinum, and lagh. There is immense temporal wealth in the stasis pods but an electronic defense system emits arcs of electricity inflicting 1D6 damage on any who touch the sealed pods. Furthermore, the electricity paralyzes the muscles of anyone who fails a CON x4 check after first taking damage, freezing them in place and subjecting them to an additional 1D6 damage per round.

Death by Stasis

Several stasis pods are open and empty. The open containers feature an automatic mechanism to grab any who venture near and place them in stasis. As an energy beam sucks in the victim, a STR x4 check is required to resist this initial pull; other investigators may have time to react and help if the victim is not drawn in within the first round or two. If the victim is sucked into the pod, the lid slams closed and an orange stasis gas begins filling the pod. Next round, syringes with transparent capsules extend from the inside corners of the pod and proceed to siphon all of the victim's blood in 1D3 rounds, making the victim a desiccated husk. The next round, the syringes begin pumping glowing green ooze into the victim. Witnessing this ghastly episode costs the viewers 0/1D2 SAN.

Unfortunately, this stasis process is meant for serpent men, not humans; the likelihood is high that the human victim is dead rather than in stasis. (A successful CON x1 roll keeps the victim alive; whether a living victim can be removed from the pod and revived is up to the keeper.) During this horrid spectacle, the investigators can try to open the closed lid (STR x4 roll) but the electrical defense system will activate (see above).

The Great Portal of the Elder Sign

At the far side of the outer chamber is a twenty-foot-high oval portal. Framing the portal are three-foot-square blocks of the purest green jade, themselves encrusted with rubies and emeralds in arcane geometries, which were originally oriented to further fortify the spells cast on the door and protect the world at large. If the gems are removed, they are easily worth an emperor's ransom (10–60,000 yen each) but because of the energies invested in them, the owner is subject to the Dream (see page 287) every night and also suffers a curse of bad karma (as per the spell Bestow Karma on pages 136–137), much like the various owners of the famous Hope Diamond through the years.

Upon each massive jade block is engraved warnings in a combination of Muvian Naacal and R'lyeh Glyphs. Those with the appropriate Mythos Language skill might be able to decipher the inscriptions: a successful skill roll reveals that the glyphs and Naacal compose a warning to go no further. A successful roll at one-half normal percentile rating or less reveals that disturbing what lies beyond the portal risks eternal dissolution of the violator's immortal soul. A success at one-fifth normal will show that the entity which slumbers beyond is the Mappo no Ryūjin, the great destroyer of the Muvian Age.

Rubble is piled up on both sides of the entrance. The broken rubble is the remains of a warded door that sealed the inner chamber before the earthquake. If investigators care to look at the rubble, large enough chunks of stone indicate that a five-foot-long carving of an elder sign was on the door. (Keepers with a flair for the dramatic may choose to have the door still in place but with massive fissures in the rock door. A few well-placed hits will collapse the door, but as this occurs, an instantaneous flash of white light erupts from the edge of the oval door to fade almost instantaneously.)

The Inner Chamber

Beyond the portal is the inner chamber, a dome shaped room 250 feet in diameter. Made of glassy smooth, black basalt, it has the same acoustics as a large gymnasium. Formerly sealed with powerful Muvian magics, a high residual static charge still lingers. Filling the entire domed shape of the 200 foot high ceiling is an intricate and detailed carving which could be an antecedent to Buddhist mandalas. A circular bas relief divided into six sections. In each pie-shaped section, one of the Six Realms or dimensions of the universe is depicted. (There is the Realm of Heavenly Beings where kami and gods reside, the Realm of Humans, the Animal Realm for creatures locked in instinctual desires, the Realm of Asuras where those of evil like the yōkai reside, the Realm of Hungry Spirits where gaki and restless yūrei are trapped, and Jigoku, the hells where oni fiends torture lost and damned souls. See pages 216–247 for more details.)

The Eight-Pointed Sigil

In the dead center of the room is an eight-pointed sigil measuring 75 feet across and enclosed by lines joining each tip to form an octagon. The star shape is formed by one-foot-wide bottomless grooves carved into the smooth floor. (Human blood spilled into these grooves weakens the warding power of the sigil). Running parallel with each groove, forming the star, are more Naacal and R'lyeh Glyphs. They repeat the warning found on the Great Portal as well as containing powerful spells to trap the Great Old One, the Mappo no Ryūjin, outside of time and space. For those who walk into the center of the room, a strange icy cold sensation will momentarily overcome them. (All who walk into the middle of the sigil automatically lose 1 POW

permanently. This energy is siphoned into the star to power the sigil's ward. If all of the "visitors" to the chamber unwittingly lose 1 POW, this will be enough to reseal the dimensional gate at the end of the scenario.)

Within the octagonal center of the eight-pointed star is the carved image of an eye aflame. Those who look upon this intricate rendering of an eye for any length of time will feel raw savage energy coursing through them, awakening a primal racial memory about this symbol, one of chaos and terror. Those who stare at the flaming eye must roll a 0/2 Sanity loss; failure means that the victim forevermore suffers a neurosis about any image involving an eye in its motif.

At the end of each of the eight star points are spherical depressions flush with the floor. Two are empty. The other six contain glowing white elliptical stones of black jade identical to the one in Sharpley's possession. The final, unaccounted stone is in fact one of the three Imperial Regalia of Japan, the Gyoku, located in the imperial palace in Tokyo. The six Gyoku stones in place around the star pulsate with mystic energy in rhythm like a heartbeat. (These egg-shaped translucent black stones serve as POW batteries which in turn maintain the powerful spell that seals a dimensional Gateway to a pocket universe outside of time and space where the Mappo no Ryûjin rages at her imprisonment.)

The Dragon Lords' Betrayal

Dr. Fuji's eyes go noticeably wild as his fragile mind finally cracks. (The keeper might have had him staring mutely at the sigil for 1D6 rounds). He first grabs Sharpley by the shoulders and shouts incoherently that the glowing stones are the same as the imperial Gyoku. (Observant investigators might notice that something oval in Sharpley's satchel is glowing and pulsating in synch with the stones in the star sigil.) Sharpley stands shocked. Hasafumi walks over to intercede on Sharpley's behalf and Fuji begins to shout at Hasafumi.

As everyone's attention is more or less on the disturbance caused by Fuji, the Yakuza "security guards" quietly move into position around the rest of the team and fall to their knees outside of the star. They unsheathe wakizashi or tanto blades as the female leader announces "Imma da yo!" ("It is time!") over the scuba radios. The Yakuza stand and herd the researchers into the center of the star. (All lose 1 POW if they have not already done so.) The Yakuza security guards are in actuality members of the Dragon Lords, the *Ryû Rôshi*, a secret society which worships the Great Old One Yig and all snakes and dragons. They seek to release the Mappo no Ryûjin to bring forth the end of humanity and a new golden age with serpent people as the dominant species on Earth.

The female Dragon Lord announces, "You witless researchers will not defile our most sacred temple. Since our founding millennia ago, we have searched for the legendary temple of the Ryu. Thank you for leading us to the birthplace of the Japanese race. We will restore the emperor and our people to their rightful place in the world. Our lord awaits, come and bear testament his glory . . . and his hunger." (If the keeper so desires, something of similar content will also suffice.)

Action

When the realization sets into his deranged mind that he will not get his treasure, Fuji's hands dart into his shoulder pack. Before any of the Dragon Lords can close the distance, his hands come out with an Uzi. (Fuji found it from a dead Chinese pirate after the assault on the *Tenkai Maru* was repulsed.) A stand off, the Dragon Lords back off but warily watch the crazed Fuji. Fuji also clusters the rest of the team in front of him (and between him and the Dragon Lords). Almost incomprehensible, he madly shouts into his radio in Japanese:

"You are all superstitious fools. All of you! These jade stones are priceless. They are the remaining six Gyoku. And the promise of wealth offered by the rubies, emeralds and diamonds in the portal is beyond calculation. The prestige of these will guarantee a chair at Todai and the eternal gratitude of the imperial household. We can all be rich. All of us!" (If the keeper wishes to unfold the dialogue differently, they are more than welcome.)

Fuji bends down to grab a glowing Gyoku while covering the Dragon Lords with the Uzi. The stone chars Fuji's hand and goes rolling off as he crumples from the pain. A Dragon Lord closes and slices off Fuji's other hand, still holding the Uzi. As this occurs, Hasafumi elbows the woman leader behind him and is rewarded by being stabbed with a tanto dagger in the gut. Fuji drops to his knees, feebly rocking back and forth in pain as blood oozes from his stump and into the groove of the star sigil. Unless stopped, the Dragon Lord who cut his hand closes to finish the job. Fuji crawls across the floor whimpering like an animal and kicks a second stone loose, making four depressions now empty. Fuji grabs the stone, throws it at the assassin's head, and succeeds in stunning his attacker. (Of course, the investigators are free to intercede as they see fit but this is the intended sequence of events in the story. The keeper may wish to unfold the action scene in a different way or even use different players in the events. The important thing is that at least two of the mounted Gyoku become dislodged in the fray and that blood seeps into the sigil's groove.)

The instant Fuji removes the second stone, a bright flash occurs at the entrance, sealing the oval door with a barrier of energy. Everyone inside the chamber is trapped within; everybody outside can see in but is sealed outside.

Pseudopods Manifest

With four of the stone keys missing, four Gyoku are not enough to keep the dimensional gateway tightly closed and so the remaining four pulse faster with a blue-white glow, straining to maintain the seal. However, the Mappo no Ryûjin has begun to manifest in the chamber but is still incorporeal. (Depending upon the desired lethality, keepers might decide to make the players do a 1D3/1D20 SAN check for witnessing the Mappo no Ryûjin's pseudopods as they manifest.)

A single incorporeal pseudopod with a snakehead at the tip appears in the sigil. It measures 15 feet in length and appears to phase through the floor in the center of the room. Over the next 5 rounds, 2D6 more ghastly tendrils appear in random places around the inner chamber. The bases of the pseudopods are anchored as the 15 foot lengths writhe and undulate. The tentacles quickly begin to flicker in synch with the pulsating stones in and out of physical solidity. These are the "whiskers" of the Ryûjin's head slowly coming through the dimensional gate in the floor. Depending upon the state of the pseudopod when it hits the victim, use either the incorporeal or the physical attack:

Incorporeal Pseudopod: Essence Drain Attack 45%, 1D4 POW drain per round.

In its partially awakened form, the Ryûjin attacks by passing its ghastly serpentine follicles through a structure or living being. If an inanimate object is attacked, it suffers 1D4 HP of damage a round. It will show signs of decay and rot or rust away. A building will collapse; a car will fall into a pile of rust; a statue will crumble to dust. Living things begin to age at an accelerated pace and lose POW at a rate of 1D4 a round. If drained to 0 POW, the person quickly becomes a decomposing corpse.

Physical Pseudopod: Engulf Attack 25%, 2D4 Damage, 1 attack per round.

The physical pseudopods are covered with a slimy mucoidal substance with weak digestive acids. (Victims who survive the initial attack suffer 1 point of damage per round for 1D4 rounds as the acids burn the skin.) At the keeper's option, several pseudopods can join into a larger one in order to engulf a victim. If a pseudopod strike does more than 50% of a victim's HP in damage, then the Ryûjin can try to engulf its target on the second round. The snakehead on the end of the pseudopod opens its mouth and swallows the target. This process is slow and takes two more rounds after the initial attack to complete as the snake-like body bulges to accommodate its meal. Physical attacks do normal damage to the follicle but damage is divided between the victim and the pseudopod equally. (A combined STR of 20 is required to free the victim before it is too late.) At the end of the third round, the pseudopod contracts to the main body of the Ryûjin where the person can be seen writhing inside the milky tube of the pseudo-snake follicle, possibly one of hundreds of victims absorbed in such a way on its body. The Ryûjin absorbs 1 POW a round until the victim is drained, whereupon the human victim dissolves and is absorbed body and soul.

(At the keeper's option, there is a 50% chance that the thrashing physical pseudopods attempt to pull a grasped victim through the dimensional gate. The problem is that the physical tentacle turns noncorporeal at the floor surface but the victim does not. The result is 1D6 crushing damage per round as the victim's body is squashed against the unyielding floor.)

The Clock is Ticking

As the Ryûjin's pseudopods writhe about, blinding white energy from the eight-pointed star illuminates the ceiling. The depictions of the Six Realms, except the Human Realm, rapidly morph into triangular gateways with actual vistas into each of those realms. Uncounted numbers of creatures in each dimension can be seen in the distance rapidly racing toward the open Gateway. Almost like a stampede, the walls and floor of the Yonaguni chamber vibrate as oni, gaki, yûkai and wrathful kami rush to the newly opened Gates into the human world. (The keeper might choose to allow a few of these beings into the chamber but is reminded that things are already grim enough for those trapped there.)

It is now that the Ryûjin's head begins to phase through the floor. First the massive deer-like horns 140' apart appear, followed by the decayed bony brow of a dragon and dead milky eyeballs 20' high. The Ryûjin is slowly and ominously phasing up through the polished floor. (This scene can be played for dramatic effect or the keeper may roll 2D6 rounds for the head to fully appear in the chamber.) Each follicle on the beast is a pseudopod capable of the type of attack outlined above. The air vibrates with the chant "Om Mappo Ryûjin Hum," which grows to a deafening boom as the Ryûjin fully appears.

The keeper should secretly roll a Sanity check for each player seeing the Ryûjin: 1D10/1D100 SAN loss. However, the full impact of the Ryûjin's sanity blasting presence takes 6–12 rounds (Length is keeper's choice) before the investigators are rendered completely ineffectual. The investigators have that length of time to figure out that the glowing stones are the literal and figurative keys and to replace them in the depressions to seal the gateway.

The keeper should force each player to clearly state what their investigator will do in the next round, giving them 15–25 seconds on a watch—no more than this should be allowed. This will engender a sense of urgency for this final scene in the scenario.

If the investigators take no action to close the Ryûjin's portal, Sharpley and Hasafumi will attempt to. Even if they fail (at the keeper's choosing), it should give investigators a guide on what to do.

As the investigators drop the first stone into a depression, the Ryûjin roars, shaking the chamber with a deafening screech. The portals to the other realms slam shut. When the second stone is placed, the Ryûjin flickers to incorporeal form. If the investigators drop Sharpley's stone in the gate is firmly sealed by a bright white flash.

Conclusion

As the Sanity loss from seeing the Mappo no Ryûjin settles in, the investigators' world fades to nothingness. At this point, an evil keeper might get up and take a break or go get some popcorn to torment the players.

Those who have survived the final moments of the encounter with the Ryûjin each awaken in padded white rooms firmly secured in straightjackets. The keeper might choose to take each player into a separate room and describe his investigator's situation and instruct the player not to share his fate with those also at the table. If keepers wish, they can roleplay an interview between the staff psychiatrist and the investigator who must try to convince his Japanese doctor that he or she is sane enough to be released. Keepers who wish to keep the player characters trapped in the asylum for a time could optionally run several adventures in the Dreamlands or in the asylum itself. Ah yes, Japanese medicine!

With tactful questions to the doctor, they can discover that they have each been totally incoherent in the mental ward of the Tokyo Institute for Wellness for 3D4 weeks. (The keeper may choose to have each investigator suffering from a different type of illness: catatonia, schizophrenia, violent seizures, or reversion to childhood.) Sharpley and Emi also survived but are completely insane and diagnosed as beyond recovery by the Institute's staff. The mystery of how the investigators escaped the ruins, and how they arrived at the asylum, are threads that can be woven into an entire campaign as the investigators back track and try to discover what happened to the rest of the research group and what to do next.

Characters

YAKUZA SECURITY GUARDS (Dragon Lords)
Group of 10, use these stats for all (or devise own):

STR 16	CON 14	SIZ 15	INT 09	POW 09
DEX 15	APP 10	EDU 06	SAN 65	HP 15

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Katana 67%, 1D10+db
Tanto 45%, 1D4+db
Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db

Skills: Bushidô 55%, Cultural Etiquette 18%, Fast Talk 58%, Jingoism 65%, Martial Arts (Iaido) 48%, Patriotism 45%, Persuade 35%, Mythos 8%, Zoku (Yakuza) 85%.
Consult the Dragon Lords entry on pages 188– 192 for further details.

DR. CLARK H. SHARPLEY, Age 46, Department of Ancient Languages and Myths, Stanford University, Todai Visiting Scholar

STR 12	CON 15	SIZ 15	INT 18	POW 17
DEX 14	APP 13	EDU 20	SAN 45 (0 now)	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Standing 35%, Archaeology 60%, Bargain 30%, Clairvoyance* 34%, Credit Rating 45%, Computer Use 48%, Cthulhu Mythos 18%, English 99%, Fast Talk 50%, History (Japan) 65%, Library Use 55%, Literature (Asia) 45%, Lore (Japan) 35%, Mythos Language (Muvian Naacal) 18%, Occult 40%, Other Language (Kobô Japanese) 67%, Other Language (Latin) 60%, Other Language (Mandarin Chinese) 55%, Other Language (Modern Japanese) 85%.

* *See "Optional Rules: Psychic Abilities" on page 199.*

HIRO HASAFUMI, PH.D., Age 54, Todai Archeology Department

STR 13	CON 14	SIZ 16	INT 18	POW 17
DEX 12	APP 16	EDU 19	SAN 65	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Lore (Todai) 25%, Academic Standing 15%, Credit Rating 65%, Classical Chinese 60%, Computer Use 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Cultural Etiquette 15%, Fast Talk 50%, History (Japan) 65%, Library Use 55%, Occult 40%, Lore (Japan) 35%, Lore (Lost Civilizations) 85%, Mythos Language (Muvian Naacal) 18%, Other Language (English) 85%, Other Language (Kobô Japanese) 43%, Scuba Operation 78%, Swim 45%, Underwater Archaeology 90%.

HIRO FUJI, PH.D., Age 61, Todai Archeology Department Head

STR 10	CON 11	SIZ 13	INT 16	POW 12
DEX 12	APP 12	EDU 18	SAN 40	HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Lore (Todai) 65%, Academic Standing 55%, Archaeology 70%, Bureaucratic Administration 45%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 4%, Cultural Etiquette 45%, History (Japan) 85%, Library Use 35%, Geology 93%, Lore (Japan) 30%, Other Language (English) 25%.

EMI OCHI (Possessed by Astral Serpent), Age 26, Senior Graduate Student, Todai Archeology Department

STR 09	CON 09	SIZ 14	INT 17	POW 16
DEX 15	APP 17	EDU 17	SAN 45	HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Lore (Todai) 25%, Academic Standing 45%, Archaeology 60%, Bureaucratic Administration 35%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 19%, Cultural Etiquette 25%, History (Mu) 78%, Library Use 45%, Lore (Japan) 30%, Mythos Language (Muvian Naacal) 45%, Other Language (English) 9%.

KENJI OHASA, Age 23, Graduate Student, Computer Science Department, University of Ryukyu, Naha

STR 10	CON 13	SIZ 15	INT 16	POW 13
DEX 13	APP 13	EDU 16	SAN 80	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Cartography 58%, Computer Use 95%, Cryptology (Computer Cracker) 28%, Electronics 78%, Internet Use 85%, Lore (Conspiracy Theories) 45%, Other Language (English) 45%, Radio Operator 43%, Sonar Use 65%, Scuba Operation 18%, Swim 35%, Underwater Archaeology 20%.

ISHII MORITANI, Age 25, Graduate Student, Todai Oceanography Department

STR 15	CON 16	SIZ 16	INT 15	POW 15
DEX 14	APP 14	EDU 15	SAN 87	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Academic Standing 8%, Bargain 46%, Cultural Etiquette 18%, Electrical Repair 37%, Library Use 25%, Lore (Oceans & Shipwrecks) 45%, Mechanical Repair 68%, Meteorology 36%, Oceanography 67%, Operate Trawler 36%, Other Language (English) 35%, Scuba Operation 88%, Swim 75%, Underwater Archaeology 39%.

KENTA, Age 46, Ainu Ship Captain

STR 14	CON 13	SIZ 15	INT 11	POW 14
DEX 14	APP 08	EDU 07	SAN 87	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Bargain 57%, Folklore (Ainu) 37%, History (Ainu) 35%, Mechanical Repair 47%, Pilot Fishing Vessel 86%, Navigate (Ocean) 57%, Other Language (Japanese) 65%, Swim 65%.

KONTA

STR 15	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 09	POW 15
DEX 12	APP 10	EDU 08	SAN 85	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

KUMU, Sailor, Son of Captain Kenta

STR 14	CON 14	SIZ 15	INT 10	POW 13
DEX 10	APP 11	EDU 08	SAN 89	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Also see pages 213–214 for more information on the characters.

Scroll Five, Section Two

Tonight, on *The Steel Chef:* the food fights back! Mythos sushi, anyone?

SECTION TWO:

SINISTER SEEDS

More adventure ideas for enterprising Keepers and their investigators.

The Eagle and the Lion will unleash the wrath of timeless chaos, burning Amaterasu's children with her own power. In the blink of an eye, the City of the Carp will vanish. The Goddess will cry black tears in her anguish.

—The Shinsen Tazeen.

"Sinister Seeds" offers over two dozen additional scenario ideas and jump-off points for idea-hungry keepers. Another possible use for them is as sub-plots and red herrings for existing scenarios. A sinister seed adds a layer of complexity to a scenario which may seem too straightforward. A keeper might also disseminate the background details and premise for a sinister seed in the course of other investigations, then allow investigators to look into the seed when other more pressing events are taken care of. May these additions add depth to your settings and, most importantly, make *Cthulhu Japan* even more enjoyable!

Alien Plague

Premise: A highly publicized outbreak of a virulent and as yet unidentified disease has struck JAL Air Flight J107 from Korea bound for Osaka. Fortunately, upon landing, all passengers have been detained in quarantine at Osaka's Kansai Airport. Initial investigations by health authorities reveal the original carrier to have been a Turkish businessman who was the first to die when his internal organs liquefied. The majority of the passengers on Flight J107 are foreigners. This scare has caused health officials to detain all incoming foreigners in quarantine for a period of at least twelve hours to conduct complete medical examinations.

This morning, during U.S. naval wargames practice in Okinawa, two torpedoes somehow went hot and sank a vehicle ferry loaded to maximum passenger capacity. Tickets put the complement at 250 passengers, including 50 children returning from school and ten off-duty U.S. marines. The body count is undetermined but figures look grim.

Earlier this week in a press conference, the Japanese Ministry of Justice announced the capture of ten North Korean spies living in Tokyo for the past two months. They came ashore in a mini-sub with assumed Japanese identities, and earmarked important salarymen in key areas of commerce for abduction and forced labor in Korea. This is the third time in as many years the North Koreans have tried this tactic for corporate espionage. It's the first time the spies were caught before they could abduct their targets, thanks to a tip by a store owner witnessing the use of altered Korean saints in vending machines. Several Japanese families are already using diplomatic channels to gain the return of their captive Japanese relatives in North Korea who are being forced to teach Japanese language to spies.

On the leadership front, the Japanese prime minister has suffered from a minor heart attack and has stepped down due to his personal illness.

These, as well as any other events deemed suitably traumatic to the Japanese national psyche, occur within the span of a few days. Average Japanese citizens are feeling unusually xenophobic. The ultra right, who dream of a golden age of an unpolluted Japan, have fanned the flames by patrolling the streets in vans equipped with loudspeakers that blare their slogans. On trains and street corners, resident foreigners must endure hard stares and outright avoidance. Some dirty looks have degenerated into outright scuffles and fights as hate and suspicion falls upon all foreigners of being plague carriers, liars, and killers. Yankee and bosozoku motorcycle gangs roam the streets looking for foreigners to harass. Bullying in the schools of anybody with "foreign taint" is epidemic. The time is ripe for a new prime minister, one who will abolish the current constitution made by the occupation armies of WWII and put the future of Japan back into the hands of its people.

Task: The investigators must determine if these are just unfortunate random events or if they were orchestrated by some power or entity. Can they undo some of the damage?

Consequences: If the investigators are foreign, it will be incredibly difficult for them to function. Even close Japanese friends will be uncomfortable to be seen in public with them (though still loyal to their barbarian friends). If involved in a fight or conflict, player characters might find themselves jailed without reason because of high anti-foreigner sentiment.

Twists: The disease is a red herring. There is no direct Mythos involvement but, if the keeper wants to propose it, the disease may be some new vector of attack by Madame Yi, an avatar of Yidhra. Or perhaps someone's laptop onboard the flight opened a Gate for a small number of fractal creatures to come into this reality. Or maybe lethal nano-probes meant to be secreted into Japan were somehow activated prematurely.

Is it coincidental or planned that these events would shift public opinion of foreigners into a bad light? Maybe there is no conspiracy to deal with; some events like the infected airplane may be Mythos-related, but there might not be any master plan. Another answer might be that the astral serpents in concert with the Dragon Lords have caused a shift in power so they can pop a puppet prime minister into office, with the added bonus of public paranoia to facilitate tampering with the governmental structure.

The Splintered Mirror

Premise: Sammy's Senior, or SR to his friends, a mega pop star maker, producer, and director, has invited the investigators and dozens of VIP guests backstage to see his stable of Japanese pop stars. One of SR's most famous female singers, Naomi Ame, had her twenty-fifth birthday today. Lately Naomi has been erratic and petulant. When the tour group follows SR to her dressing room, she is staring at an ancient bronze mirror and quickly turns around to greet the guests. Observant investigators see that the mirror image of Naomi's face continues to look on for a few seconds. Ms. Ame becomes angry at the intrusion and screams at SR. The two verbally spar in Japanese for several long minutes. As the group leaves, she throws an ashtray at SR but it hits the door. The next day, Naomi is officially fired, and she promptly vanishes. Her friends insist she has gone missing but not enough time has passed for the police to take action on a missing person report.

Task: The investigators get a chance to investigate the Japanese pop scene. They might want to find out the story behind SR or the fate of the bronze mirror in Naomi's dressing room.

Consequences: If not investigated, it's business as usual on the J-Pop scene.

Twists: SR is exploiting the young talent he manages. His homosexual orientation is common in the entertainment industry, but dark rumors abound about SR and his sexual harassment of his young stars. Stars who fall out with SR regularly disappear from "the business," rumor. Some of these disappearances may be murders, but SR is so powerful that the authorities dare not investigate. J-Pop star Naomi has an enchanted item, the Mirror of Matsuyama (see pages 150–151 for details), which was slowly feeding upon her soul in exchange for keeping her young and beautiful. Some Mythos element may be manipulating SR or he may be active in the Mythos himself.

MIRROR OF MATSUYAMA

Sammy's Senior: An obese man in his late fifties, Sammy is a Japanese American who came to Japan and leveraged his knowledge of the American pop scene into a career. Seeming fresh and original at the time, Sammy Sakamoto became a household name. Sammy arranges tie-ins with TV opening themes, saturation distribution of predetermined top-40 hits by record stores before songs are heard by the public, and air time on radio and TV shows to expose his J-Pop stars. He keeps a stable of attractive young boys and girls who are highly appealing to the public, even if their actual talent for singing and acting is limited. The average public life of SR's J-Pop stars is 2–3 years. When their voices break from puberty or when they demand more than a pittance in pay or release from the company dorms, they disappear from the spotlight—sometimes altogether.

Robo Sushi

Premise: The Tokyo Institute of Wellness has a problem—its patients are mysteriously vanishing. This horrifying development is one that the institute wishes to keep under wraps, so finding an in-house solution is preferable to notifying authorities. Up to this point they've had no luck. In the month since the disappearances began, six patients have gone missing. Are they being harvested by an unknown villain for some dark purpose?

Task: The institute has quietly taken on the investigators with the understanding that they will look into this situation with the utmost discretion and confidentiality. It is the investigators' first order of business to stop the security breaches and prevent further abductions. Is someone inside the institute helping with the kidnappings?

Consequences: If the investigators manage to stop further abductions, the institute will be grateful but still must deal with the existing disappearances. If the investigators find the culprits and inform the institute, the managers will at least have someone to blame when inquiries are made. If the investigators return the remains of those who disappeared, or even rescue the missing patients, they will be guaranteed a boon by the institute.

Twists: One clue is an oily residue and purplish fibrous substance in claw-like gashes on the walls of the patients' cells. Who is responsible? Are the cultists of Buddha's Tears looking for sacrifices? Are the Dragon Lords cleansing the impure from their race? Are the Emerald Lama and the Green Caps looking for new initiates to enlighten? One possibility is that a Psi-Mech enclave may be taking patients for use as raw materials in cloning and nano-tech experiments. Psi-Mech might even be using the patients' physical bodies for implants of bio-morph enhancements. The oily residue could be from bio-borg Hachi-Rei when she kidnaps the victims.

Destructive Tranquility

Premise: Wrong place, wrong time. The investigators, either involved in another case or in-between missions, are at ground zero when the nuclear behemoth Gazira makes landfall on Japanese shores (see page 258 for the Gazira entry). In short order, Gazira manages to flatten most of the city ward where he comes ashore. What Gazira doesn't destroy, the Self Defense Forces, fresh on the scene, finish off with ineffectual counter-strikes. Gazira, totally unfazed by the SDF, returns to the depths of the ocean on his own. Now, the SDF and police spring into action. Amidst the smoldering ruins, the authorities go door-to-door with fat yellow envelopes of cash for survivors and victims—all to be swept under the tatami mat.

Task: What the investigators do is up to the keeper. Player characters could look into Gazira, they could try to help the SDF in the cleanup, they could try to talk to the victims and authorities, and ask why people are treating this as "business as usual."

Consequences: When the investigators talk to the survivors of the disaster, they deny any appearance of the monster Gazira. Moreover, they insist that the player characters are mistaken: the damage to the city is the result of an earthquake. Addressing the authorities is even less helpful; they are only concerned if the investigators are wounded and if they have property in the area. If they respond in the affirmative, the investigators receive a thick envelope of what can only be called bribe money. If they refuse the money or demand more information about Gazira, the SDF tries to detain these uncooperative people. If

the player characters elude the SDF, the military pursues them throughout the ruins of the city ward. The SDF will not hurt them, just detain them to ensure they won't raise an alarm before the spin doctors release official press reports about the 6.5 magnitude earthquake. After that, no one will believe the investigators.

Twists: Nuclear radiation leaks often trigger Gazira's appearance. Why did the monster make its appearance this time? The arrival of this giant walking terror is certainly worth a Sanity check, and it might be a real hoot to have the investigators fleeing in terror for their lives in the thick of Gazira's romping and stomping. *Aiyee! Aiyee!* Why does the SDF cover up the monster's rampages? Where does the monster go between appearances? Are the giant monster movies coincidence or based on truth? Is there a Monster Island? What is the Mythos connection?

The Withered Blossom

Premise: The bodies of several local fishermen have turned up on the shores of Tsubari village, horribly disfigured and oozing green ichor from vicious wounds. Locals report sightings of the mythic iso onna in the rough waters of the coast. The Japanese mermaid, the iso onna (see page 236), is surrounded by fantastical legends: its blood and flesh bring immortality to those who consume it. From far and wide the foolish arrive to track down the mythical beast. Interested parties include an aging movie star, Akiko Yakanori. In the late 1970s, Mrs. Yakanori performed in choice movie roles as a tough female Yakuza boss. Of considerable wealth, she now lives in a large villa in the hills above the simple homes of Tsubari. Mrs. Yakanori has hired people to secure the flesh of the iso onna for her consumption. She is willing to take great risks to recover the beauty of her youth.

Task: The investigators can work in the employ of the aging starlet or by competing with another team already in service to Mrs. Yakanori. If acting on their own, the player characters might want to save the life of the iso onna, retrieve it for some third party, or even for themselves. Another goal might be to learn more about the rich actress and her schemes.

Consequences: If the iso onna does indeed exist, do they try to capture it or kill it? What caused the yōkai to manifest near the village? The team for Mrs. Yakanori will most likely be shady if not downright dangerous. Local fishermen probably have also formed into hunting parties with plans of their own for the poisonous flesh.

Twists: The iso onna is indeed prowling the waters of the village's shore. Whatever the plans the local human population may have for it, the investigators shouldn't forget how deadly the living monster can be. The savage beast will do its best to kill and devour humans who approach it.

While the story of immortality granted by consuming iso onna flesh has a layer of truth, most if not all people who eat the flesh or drink the blood of the beast begin to die as their internal organs wildly mutate and soon cause their bodies to burst. Others rapidly transform into legged versions of the iso onna. Witnessing such deaths or changes is cause for a 2/1D6+1 Sanity point loss. At the keeper's option, it may be that those of deep one blood do not suffer death but gain immortality.

Green Bamboo

Premise: A high school outing of the tenth grade class of Nishi High has gone horribly wrong. After the two hour hike from the school grounds to the Prefectural People's Park of Peace, the students had two hours to explore the park and eat lunch before they would return to school. They dressed in standard gym outfits for the hike and carried school backpacks. Of the 180 10th grade students, only 24 returned to school to relate what had occurred. All are weary, tattered, and frightened. A friend on the staff of Nishi High has called in the investigators in to help uncover what has happened.

Task: Timing is critical. The school can only hold the students in lockdown until 10 P.M. before parents start to call on the PTA for intervention. The investigators need to learn what happened and possibly go to the park to recover the missing students.

Consequences: When the investigators interview the survivors, they get fragmented reports from the frightened teenagers. The teachers in charge of the outing suggested a brief exploration of a cave in the park before releasing them for lunch. Most students entered the cave. Strange bellows echoed in the depths of the cave. They scared the students, who tried to get out but were quickly overwhelmed by a strange smelling gas. Some of the more hysterical students report large bestial forms with horns. One boy even says the attackers were oni.

Twists: If the investigators are foreign, their novelty with the students may slow getting useful information. Nonetheless, the students have been kidnapped. They have been taken into the bowels of the earth. For assailants, there are many options. One mundane explanation is that the tenth graders stumbled upon the entrance to a hidden facility of some secret society or cult. Or perhaps the Buddha's Tears or the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus abducted the children for rituals. More fantastical is that the cave is one of the many passages into the great depths of the earth. Oni have taken the young people to be used as slaves in their fire pits far below, perhaps even to the Vaults of Zin or the Dreamlands.

Sign of the Times

Premise: The great Kobe earthquake leveled many parts of that city. Rebuilding was slow and costly. One grim benefit of the scale of the damage by the earthquake was that city planners were able to redesign portions of the city on a grand scale. Kobe's Rokoko Island in the bay was hardest hit. Built to house 90,000 residents, Rokoko New Town was the answer, but it has not been as successful as city planners had hoped. Most displaced Kobe residents still prefer the tracts of run-down temporary housing to the cold, lifeless halls of the New Town complex. The streets of New Town are cloaked in eerie silence. Abandoned stores and sparsely populated monolithic apartment "mansions" dominate the atmosphere of New Town. Those who refuse to live there say that the place is haunted. How is this possible in a brand new ward?

Task: There is something unsettling about New Town. There are no sounds of birds or squirrels in the parks or streets and even pets whimper when taken out for a walk. What is wrong with this place?

Consequences: If the investigators go into the underground passages, they will find doors to rough dirt tunnels that go ever deeper into the earth. They lead to a vast subterranean cavern with a bottomless chasm. The closer to the center of New Town they go, the more psychic pressure they feel when walking through the tunnels. The effect is akin to being smothered.

Twists: If viewed from above, New Town bears the semblance of a giant Elder Sign. The convention center's structure is carefully crafted to create a circle of power. New Town is built upon a powerful dragon path as well as an active major fault line. Is the configuration of New Town harnessing ambient energy to summon a Great Old One, or to keep one at bay? What about chthonians?

New Town: Multi-billion-yen aid by the Diet has allowed the construction of a mini-city and convention complex called New Town. The concrete and steel towers of self-sufficient New Town are serviced by an unmanned monorail bisecting the center of the complex and terminating at the Kobe rail station. The two-mile-long complex

is oval *in* shape. The outer buildings are 40-story apartment complexes with a large circular convention center in the middle of the settlement. Designed so that residents need never leave the area, shops and stores for every need are also concentrated in the ring-shaped convention complex. It is perhaps the first real-world attempt at an arcology—a self-sustaining city within a city.

Stealing Ki

Premise: A new religion sect, Midori Kami, is harnessing an esoteric tai chi practice, a sophisticated method of channeling ki, life energy, from the earth into a powerful personal Tao field. Whether the effects of the Tao field can be scientifically proven, massive outbreaks of yôkai manifestations seem to follow the new religion's demonstrations. Traditional Shinto priests claim it is angering the kami, who will show their godly wrath if the practice continues.

Task: Find out if the Tao field is a real phenomenon. Verify if the yôkai are real or artificially invoked. What is Midori Kami about? Are they legitimate or a front? Can they be stopped? How?

Consequences: The tai chi exercise which invokes the Tao field seriously disrupts the natural ki in the dragon paths of the earth. More than several hundred people perform this tai chi rite in the new religion's services. This imbalance is causing free ki energy to manifest as monstrous yôkai which are terrorizing citizens. If the investigators cannot stop the practice, the kami will indeed become angered and begin stealing ki from people, due to the severing of their natural connection with the dragon lines by the tai chi rite.

Twists: Investigation into Midori Kami (Green Goddess) reveals that its roots are in a much older organization, a zaibatsu which was heavily involved in the opium trade up until WWII. The key to the Tao field is ingestion of a mixture called Breath of the Black Lotus, a concoction including diluted Liao drug. There may be some connection with the Green Caps or the Black Monk. Midori Kami may be an offshoot of a Chinese organization with rapidly growing worldwide appeal.

Digital Zombie

Premise: A high school boy, Yuki, can't hack it anymore. Of slight build and anemic complexion, Yuki has been unable to bear the constant bullying at school, nor can he relate to his parents, who constantly push him to achieve in school. Lacking any social skills, and only able to microwave food to eat, Yuki withdraws into the video games of his DreamStation 2. A hot new game has come out, *Kutsuru's Revenge*, based on a popular manga, produced by B.C. Press for the Dreamstation 2 market.

The police report reconstructs events of that evening:

Yuki played the new game all week and did not go to school. When Yuki's mother came into his room, she found that he had not bothered to get up to go to the bathroom but had a bowel movement in his room. Yuki doesn't even look up from his game to answer his mother's *(oka-san's)* frantic questions. On the screen, a tentacled monster crushes the life out of a helpless schoolgirl as her entrails explode across the screen. Zombies on the screen amble toward the body to eat the remains. Horrified, Yuki's mother hurries out the room to fetch her husband. They both return to the room where Yuki's father *(otoh-san)* reprimands the boy. Yuki never bothers to turn around, but continues to play the game. The man returns to the television room to read the paper; the wife nervously prepares dinner in the kitchen. Several minutes later, the boy calmly emerges from his room, walks up behind his father who is still reading the newspaper, and caves in his father's skull with an aluminum baseball bat. Yuki's mother, hearing the commotion, looks in and then runs to the front door screaming. Yuki catches her at the door and beats her with the bloodied bat.

Neighbors, hearing the sounds, call the police. Yuki is found playing his game and does not resist the officers. He currently sits in a juvenile detention center in a catatonic state.

Task: The investigators are charged to discover what if any Mythos catalyst played a part in Yuki's behavior. As the player characters investigate, dozens of similar cases of "digital zombies" are reported nationwide. Only a few are as bloody as Yuki's case.

Consequences: If the investigators look into video games, the publisher turns out to be B.C. Press (a Buddha's Tears subsidiary).

Twists: The Dreamstation 2 game, *Kutsuru's Revenge*, is designed to electronically summon Chorazin if played 108 times (draining the gameplayer's POW and magic points). If, in turn, 108 people play the game 108 times (highly possible in the high population density of Tokyo or Osaka), Chorazin will gain enough energy to physically manifest, the ultimate goal for Buddha's Tears. The catatonic teens await a signal to activate. Subliminals in a television commercial for the video game will be the trigger. The flashing effects cause the digital zombies to awake and become ravenous flesh-eating creatures impervious to pain. They continue to attack everyone within reach until detained or slain. They are still human, but this could affect all of central Tokyo. For one horrible night, life will imitate a video game.

Kthulhu's Karaoke; Or, "Cthulhu's Song"

Premise: Enter "Hello Kthulhu," a cuddly plush toy of a green tentacled squid creature with big round red eyes and pink overalls. Made by the Nitrio company, the Hello Kthulhu line of products spans the complete range of consumer needs, all emblazoned with the image of the company's mascot, Kthulhu-chan. From toasters to keychains to sing-along pop songs that people affectionately croon at karaoke bars, Hello

Kthuihu has become a national obsession of the *CC* fad, "cute and creepy." Nirio Inc. promises an animated *Hello Kthulhu* TV show for the new broadcast season. Meanwhile, the new song "Tako Tomodachi" or "Tentacle Friend" by Naomi Ame is all the rage on the airwaves.

Task: From where exactly has Nirio received its inspiration? What are the effects of putting the image of the Great Old One, Cthulhu, in the mass media? Is this part of some great plot or just consumerism at its best? And just what are the six sounds the Hello Kthulhu plush toy makes when its string is pulled?

Consequences: The cute and creepy effect has taken its toll on the Japanese psyche. Most people experience a bizarre mix of attraction and revulsion to Hello Kthulhu products. However, serious collectors, otaku, who create Hello Kthulhu shrines in their homes, are severely impacted. Psychosis, obsession, and even severe insanity have resulted. Nirio Inc. has escaped criminal or civil prosecution because of clean hands—no direct links between their company and the abuse of their products can be found. Nirio can't be blamed for a cultural fad taken to an extreme by select people, can it?

Twists: Repeated exposure to Hello Kthulhu products, song lyrics, and the like are resulting in disturbing dreams of a watery place of dread. It's up to the keeper to determine if Mythos energies are triggered by the recorded summoning ritual in the plush toy, the encrypted message in the karaoke lyrics, or by collecting a specific number of Nirio consumer products.

Corporate Samurai

Premise: It would seem that corporate Japan's economic warrior, the salaryman, has finally taken the romantic affair with the samurai ethic too far. In Yotsubishi keiritsu a section chief beheaded a clerk who had come into his office due to a poor productivity evaluation. But the reason why the section chief pulled his family heirloom from the wall and separated his subordinate's head from his neck was because the employee did not bow properly. As the blood-splattered man was carted off by the police, he calmly stated the dead man was not sincere in his apologies—he did not have the proper corporate spirit.

This is only the tip of the chopstick. Bizarrely draconian and rigid interpretations of Bushidô in business practices have taken root amongst Yotsubishi's executives. Initiatives include weekend zen retreats with severe discipline for new workers.

Task: The investigators are to infiltrate Yotsubishi Heavy Industries by being hired on as new recruits. An inside accomplice will create papers and documents which allow the investigators to penetrate corporate culture. The investigators are completely on their own. They are segregated by gender and forced to live in gray concrete corporate dorms. They will wear the company uniform, a gray or black suit and the company pin. The first month of their employment will be rigid indoctrination into the corporate spirit. Most of this training is genuine but some is manipulation and institutional brainwashing to bring back the mighty zaibatsu days of Japan.

Consequences: If the investigators are too passive about the training, they risk brainwashing; if too resistant, they might come under suspicion for not being team players. They do gain 1D10 percentiles in the skills of Corporate Culture, Bushidô, and Zoku. Another benefit for the keeper is that that this presents a method to inject the player characters into a corporate subculture for other reasons, such as looking into Yotsubishi Psi-Mech or Project Yûrei.

Twists: The malignant influence behind the brutal new corporate ethic is the Aku-Shin Kage, in the mask of Nobunaga Oda dressed in a three piece suit. The avatar is acting as chairman of Yotsubishi Heavy Industries (unknown to President Akira Mori, aka The Oyabun).

A Brush Stroke

Premise: A Noh theater troupe is touring Japan, performing especially for school drama clubs. The investigators are either in the neighborhood of a performance or are investigating another case when the Noh play attracts their attention. After the show, the investigators overhear the head of the touring troupe complain about the theft of the troupe's oldest and most valuable mask, said to be over 250 years old. It has been handed down from the head of the troupe's clan to his successor every generation since then. The white wooden mask is a delicate rendition of a jealous young woman. The principal of the school calls an assembly in the gymnasium to admonish the students. If someone did indeed steal the priceless antique, he or she can step forward now without repercussions. The 400 students sit in silence, then report back to class. As they do, the investigators see three boys cruelly trip a short spectacled boy, who lands on the floor with a loud thump. Many students exiting the gym muffle their laughter as the boy turns octopus red.

Task: The investigators might want to look into the history of the troupe and the story behind the missing mask. The Noh troupe will be grateful for the return of the mask—no questions asked. The only clue to the origins of the mask is a copy of the artist's intricate ink calligraphy signature in an old book on Noh plays. The calligraphy matches that of the penmanship of *The Wandering Path* by the Kunoi Bohzu.

Consequences: If the investigators do not find the mask before it finishes its evil purpose, they will have a much more dangerous problem to deal with: a free onryô.

Twists: The middle school boy, Kitaro, is unable to bear the incessant bullying by his peers. His soul has cried out and the spirit inhabiting the Noh mask has answered. Thereby Kitaro has made a dark pact with a vengeance-hungry yûrei. In return for visiting revenge upon his tormentors, the boy must take the mask and place it on the faces of the bullies. With enough souls the yûrei will be able to free herself and become an onryô.

The Noh Mask: The creator of the mask is the Black Monk, who tethered in it the life force of a young girl from the old Yoshiwara prostitution quarter. This girl was once the Black Monk's friend when he was still mortal. Bullied incessantly by fellow courtesans, she was killed during one of their cruel jokes. She lives on as a spiteful yûrei. The Black Monk may come on the scene to claim the mask for himself or at the very least vex the investigators.

Monster Island

Premise: It can finally be revealed why Japan has fought so hard for the last fifty years to reclaim the Kuril Island chain from Russia after it was lost as spoils in World War II—the fabled Monster Island exists

there. Several Project Yûrei researchers, working in tandem with Todai crypto-zoologists, have discovered a small uncharted island in the Kuril chain with a high radiation count and large anomalous life forms. They are planning an expedition there in the next few weeks. The investigators have been brought aboard for their relevant expertise.

Task: After the journey through arctic waters to the wind-swept island, the investigators' team discovers that a Japanese tour group company has beaten them to the punch. All the new visitors to the island immediately encounter the monstrous versions of Ice Age beasts. The majority of the monsters on the island are dangerous only in so far as they may accidentally trample human observers because of their sheer bulk. Most, like the woolly mammoth, instinctively fear humans, but predators like sabertooth tigers and gigantic cave bears do exist.

Consequences: Unable to interfere with the parka-clad tour guide and her forty-plus tourists, the player characters must find a way to explore the island and keep the tourists from harm. Living specimens of Pleistocene-era creatures constitute the scientific discovery of the century. Are they naturally occurring here? Are they genetically engineered by some secret program? Is there a rift in time here on the island? If the investigators find anything connected to the Mythos, what will they do with it, assuming it doesn't kill them first?

Twists: There are gigantic forms of Ice Age animal life to contend with, but there are also massive alien egg-like pods the size of an automobile. Slimy and oozing, a dozen egg-pods of different shapes, sizes, and colors dot the island. They pulsate and throb with life within. Are they embryonic Great Old Ones? Outer Gods? How long have they been here? Whose warped version of 'Easter Island' is this?

Smothering Incense

Premise: The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II left a lasting and traumatic psychic imprint upon the fabric of reality in those two cities. Of the *hibaku*, the direct victims of the A-bombs, almost all have passed away from cancer or old age, but their children still recall the hideous stories of the blinding flash and burning hell of the *pika-don* from the bombs code-named Fat Man and Little Boy. That mere humans developed the technology of the Manhattan Project is up for conjecture, but it is certain that the bombs were dropped by human beings on human beings, a fact possibly more horrifying than any Mythos threat. One survivor-hibaku, a Soto Zen priest, said that the burning flesh on that day was like smothering incense. Even today he cries when he thinks about the tragedy. The wounds from the explosions never really healed, spiritually, physically, or dimensionally.

Task: The player characters are to investigate the nature of the supernatural effects, if any, that the atomic explosions left on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and what genetic manipulation or genetic change may have taken place among those involved.

Consequences: If any secret societies or cults are suicidal enough to undertake a powerful Mythos summoning ritual in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, it will spell the end of the world. The age of man concludes and Mappo begins.

Twists: The effects of the bombs had deleterious effects beyond the radiation poisoning and mass destruction. Effects on a much more subtle, ethereal level occurred as the atomic bonds of reality were irreparably weakened. Those with psychic ability can sense this phenomenon most acutely at the *Gimbaku*, the A-bomb dome, said to be at the epicenter of the nuclear explosion in Hiroshima. Here, sensitives and intuitives get sharp migraines and a sense of spiritual void or nothingness. (This feeling occurs with anyone who makes a successful Channel Spirit, Clairvoyance, Meditation, or Psychometry roll.) The three dimensional physical world is the only level of reality still intact at the blast centers. The fourth and higher dimensions bear huge dimensional rips and tears. Little would be needed to rend them open in all the dimensions and imperil Japan and a large part of the world. The Outer Gods Azathoth and Yog-Sothoth wait between dimensions for the dimensional tears to open. Not even the Dragon Lords or the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus are insane enough to dare a powerful ritual in these two once-devastated cities.

GIMBAKU

Shadows of the Tentacle

Premise: There has been a sudden rash of salaryman deaths by karohshi, death by overwork. Most of the deceased are found with erotic manga or magazines, but that is perhaps not unusual. Hungry ghosts also tend to hover around the death scenes. But the strange thing is that the bodies vanish before any autopsies can be performed.

Task: A friend in the police department asks the investigators to look into the deaths. They are being brought in as consultants on these cases as the player characters have good reputations for handling strange and unusual incidents.

Consequences: If the investigators are unable to determine the cause, this apparently supernatural outbreak of karohshi could spread across Japan.

Twists: This can be the investigators' first taste of corporate culture and the faceless walls it presents to outsiders. In official channels, they will face wall after wall of denial and "not my department" by the keiritsu corporations. Is this an orchestrated plot to take down the corporate way of doing business? A misinformation campaign by a competing keiritsu? Retaliation by an internal clique or secret society against other members of a sect?

The erotic manga were originally crafted by the Buddha's Tears cult. Using passages from the *Revelations of Glaaki*, they now exist in illustrated form in B.C. Press manga. When the reader is judged corrupted, Y'Golonac partially manifests and takes the new disciple. However, the Great Old One does not devour the victim but forces him or her to create more copies of the manga, hand-copying the 108 pages into eight more individual versions. This causes the effects of karohshi and also perpetuates the tainted manga. When finished, Y'Golonac turns the salaryman into a preta, a hungry ghost. Y'Golonac returns hours later, and meanwhile the soul has suffered sublimely. Y'Golonac then absorbs the salaryman's body.

The Zen Of Insanity

Premise: Promising cutting-edge treatment for several forms of clinical insanity has been developed by doctors at the Tokyo Institute of Wellness. Approved on a limited basis nationwide, Institute Director Hide Tomita believes that this treatment is the future of medicine.

Called the Zen Method of Mental Wellness, the therapy uses an intensive regimen of directed meditation and acupuncture to restore the flow of ki to mind and body by specially trained doctors for non-violent and non-psychotic patients. The results of the treatment are nothing short of miraculous—the complete recovery of the patient's sanity in a fourth of the standard treatment time. The treatment theory is based on a fusion of Taoist and Zen Buddhist philosophies: illness is a symptom of static ki, life force energy. Mental illness is the

stagnation of ki caused by a mind unable to advance in enlightenment. This causes psychic frustration and disconnection with reality. The investigators have been invited to witness this program or perhaps they willingly come upon hearing of a program that might help cure an ailing friend.

Task: Initially the investigators might choose to merely observe the process. On the surface, the treatment appears totally on the level. Player characters will only notice significant problems by interviewing the family members of treated patients, or by having friends of their own undergo the Zen treatment. Deep understanding of the treatment requires Psychiatry or Psychoanalysis at 55% or higher. Suspicious investigators who look into cured patients might note peculiarities in the former Zen treatment recipients—an aloofness and coldness pervades the attitudes of recovered patients, but they otherwise seem calm and happy. What is not right about this procedure? Is the soul still intact? Has the patient adopted a new model for sanity? Might not some people become cunning serial killers?

Consequences: The Zen Method of Mental Wellness is highly effective in restoring Sanity points (see the Meditation skill on pages 64–65 for rules). However, the meditation creates a new model of sanity for the ailing patient.

Here is the core theory of the Zen treatment. Sanity can be defined as a conceptual construct or mental buffer humans create to cope with the world. Based upon centuries of enculturation, sanity also bears the stamp of human society's morals, ethics, and accepted norms. Sanity is the human illusion of truth pulled over the eyes. The "Mythos truth" of the world destroys sanity because it builds a different model of reality, one based upon first-hand experience with the true nature of the universe, the Cthulhu Mythos skill. When a person reaches zero Sanity points, he or she is in total comprehension and has abandoned both false assumptions and human ingrained notions of reality. This done, erratic behavior naturally occurs because the person has cut ties with static human sanity but has yet to establish a new tether—no working model of the Mythos world. Mythos enlightenment does this: it provides a structural framework so that the human mind can operate with new-found knowledge of the true nature of the universe. This is the true enlightenment that Buddha spoke of—knowledge and innate understanding of the Dharma, the law of the cosmos.

The problem with Mythos enlightenment is that the person's value system becomes alien and inhuman. He or she ceases to be human in the most conventional sense. Mythos enlightenment provides a framework for people devoid of human sanity so that they may function perfectly well as individuals within human society. They are not compelled to go out and murder people or to slaver like mad dogs, as some humans might be at zero Sanity. They are much more self-aware, likely to see humankind's role in the universe as insignificant, and to turn to venerating Mythos deities and Great Old Ones. Former patients of the Zen treatment often become exceedingly charismatic, exuding an aura of unearthly knowledge and confidence.

Twists: The keeper can plant this seed during a previous scenario when the investigators are too busy to respond. This potential cure might prove the only hope for putting a friend back into the fray quickly. A Mythos object, the Emerald Mandala, is used for meditative focus as part of the Zen treatment.

Keeper's Option: The treatment does not increase Sanity or restore current Sanity points. Rather, a new score for Satori is tracked on top of the old stat. The higher the ratio of Satori to permanent SAN, the more alien the person's mindset becomes. The only way to restore a person to classic sanity is to fail a Satori roll and then rebuild Sanity in ways that maintain human cultural values.

The EMpty Rice Bowl

Premise: A simple Tendai priest approaches the investigators asking for their aid in rescuing a sacred Buddhist scripture from destruction. The tome is an ancient sutra dating to the sixth century and written in classical Chinese. The monk, Jubei, has spent his life searching for the book, as have many generations of head priests from his temple in Kyoto. Jubei believes that the scripture was hidden by a survivor of the temple burnings in the Japanese middle ages. The sutra contains passages from the Buddha's sermons long thought lost to time. It also includes commentary written much later by Tibetan sages.

Task: If the investigators take on this task, they soon find historical evidence pointing to a place of exile high in the mountains surrounding Shikoku Island's Mount Ichizuchi, the highest mountain in western Japan. It is on Shikoku Island. The Tendai monk insists that he is unable to make the journey. He is old and frail, and so must stay behind. He does give the player characters an o-fuda for protection, a wooden plank inscribed with a Buddhist prayer. At the site, an old and derelict building clings to a sheer rock wall. Locals believe it to be a haunted monastery. None dare approach it because of an insane yūrei from the Raven Clan *(Dai Karasu)* said to walk its halls. The investigators must physically reach the monastery to check out these claims. Their options include climbing the sheer cliff face, being lowered perhaps by helicopter, or by other means.

Consequences: The willpower of the investigators determines what occurs next. The keeper can make a Luck roll to see if they see anything strange. The players can attempt Idea rolls or Spot Hidden rolls to notice that the cliff side structure casts no shadows. A POW x3 roll allows the player characters to see the rotten building as it really is—an illusion. The reality is that a fresh wooden monastery in excellent condition sits on a spur of rock that juts out from the cliff. A functional rope ladder extends from the temple outcrop to a cliff edge below. If the investigators pierce the illusion and enter the monastery, they have a new set of challenges to deal with. Living within this desolate abode are three tengu, one aged white-feathered sojobo master and two tengu priests. If the investigators can deal with the initial Sanity check, the tengu greet the intruders with the greatest decorum and politeness. The tengu are helpful in answering all questions within reason. They say that this monastery is one of the last tengu outposts in the Waking World. They also answer questions about the history of the tengu race, including their intense hatred of Hastur and the byakhee. If asked about the lost sutra, they are evasive, but if the investigators honestly describe the events leading to their arrival, the tengu become enraged and call the investigators fools—they have led the tengu's enemies right to their last sanctuary! The Green Caps want the sutra to serve their master, the Emerald Lama! If the player characters do not reveal their mission, the Yakuza soon arrive to bust down the rice paper doors. One tengu appears slain but the other two manage to fight off the attackers using physically impossible martial arts moves.

The struggle presents a chance for the investigators to help the tengu or search for the sutra. It's not hard to find: the sutra is enshrined in the open meditation room on the altar before a wooden statue of the Buddha. There are also numerous ancient texts in a small library off the tengu living quarters. The contents of the texts are up to the keeper, but include the *Book of Dzyan* and a tattered copy of *The Wandering Path*. Unless the player characters have already discovered or guessed the true nature of the lost sutra, either by private research or the tengu revealing it, any player characters with Chinese 05% or more can understand that the characters on the sutra's cover say *The Forbidden Sutra*.

If, instead of abandoning the tengu to their fate, the investigators help them fend off the Yakuza, the aged master tengu offers a service

in return: to train the player characters in martial arts, teach meditation, answer some great Mythos mystery, teach an ancient language, relate the cosmology of the Six Realms and the Japanese Dreamlands, or heal the mind of an ailing person.

Twists: The Tendai monk is actually a Green Cap of the order of the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus. He has shadowed the investigators to this location while arranging for some backup. Upon piercing the illusion placed around the monastery, the player characters have only a few hours before the Green Cap and his enforcers arrive. There are a dozen well-armed Dragon Lord foot soldiers who have orders to find the investigators by following the homing beacon in the o-fuda wooden plank. They are to take the sutra, kill the tengu, murder the investigators, and destroy the monastery, in that order. Just before the Yakuza attack, a ghostly image of the Green Cap will appear and gloat before the player characters, via a spell enchanted into the wooden plank. At a safe distance down the mountain, the Green Cap awaits the pilfered sutra, to be returned via his enforcers.

Echoes of a Bell

Echoes of a bell.
Shadow thieves timeless spark
Winter voice whispers.

Premise: The curator of the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno Park has contacted several of the investigators who have high Library Use skills. He is Junichi Sumeda, a pleasant man with graying hair and a pencil behind his ear. For the last three consecutive nights, he has seen a shadowy form moving among the shelves of the rare occult collection. Sumeda has tried to catch the interloper, but after thorough searches has found no evidence of a break-in or theft. Nonetheless, to be safe, the curator has asked the investigators and their trusted friends to inventory the rare occult collection to verify that no theft has taken place.

Task: The investigators should jump at this offer, as it presents a chance to explore the collection of Cthulhu Mythos knowledge in the National Museum. What and whether they find anything of use is up to the keeper. To keep things low key, the curator asks the investigators to help do the inventory after closing hours. The curator's youngest brother, Hiroshi, has stopped by to lend a hand too. In his thirties, Hiroshi is a bit flaky and into trendy stuff, as evidenced by his sunglasses and teal silk jacket. He couldn't pass up the offer; he's a journalist who writes a daily haiku column for the *Asahi News*.

There is an event the first night. A power outage of a few seconds is accompanied by the deep resonance of an ancient bronze temple bell far in the distance. The lights go back on and no one is worse for wear. The interesting thing about the sound is that it seems distant and northerly to everyone listening, no matter where they were. Spooked, the curator calls it a night and announces he's going to do some reading before dozing off. He pulls a peculiar book from his suitcase: its cover appears crafted from a tan military shirt. Investigators can still see the buttons and pocket with a tag bearing the name *Shintaro Ikeda* on it. If asked outright about the book, he absently remarks that it's a book that's been in the rare collection for years, and he's been meaning to read. Sumeda leaves the museum to go home.

Consequences: The next day, Curator Sumeda never shows up for work. If the investigators go to his house, they find the door locked. Apparently no one is home. A small Zen garden is in his back yard (rocks and raked sand). Breaking and entering, the player characters find that he was a single man, messy, with stacks of books everywhere. There is no trace of the curator. The only clues of wrongdoing are small dried splatters of blood on his desk and leather chair. There is no trace of the book he left with the night before.

Echoes Papers #1: Newspaper Clipping

ASAHI EVENING NEWS 14/6/2004

HERE'S HAIKU! BY SUMEDA HIROSHI

Summer heat, steel blade
Warrior blood grows cold
Chaos feeds his hate.

Emerald chants
For a dead heart. Buddha cries
Green robes hide true lies.

Dragon slumbers deep
Serpent's tongue blindness keeps
In the blood, truth creeps.

—Ikeda Shintaro, *Rock Garden on Infinity.*

For more in this collection, come to the Snow Hut in Roppongi Ward tonight at 9 P.M. for a live performance.

The curator's younger brother, Hiroshi, has a key to the Sumeda family home. He stopped by just before the investigators. He noticed the peculiar cloth book on his brother's desk in the den and scanned it. Seeing numerous disturbing haiku in the book, he took it. At work, Hiroshi copied three haiku from the pages and worked up a haiku newspaper column analyzing the haiku for the *Asahi Evening News*, circulation 20 million. The bottom of the column mentions that he will do a public poetry reading of the book tonight at the Snow Hut, a swank club in Tokyo's Roppongi Ward. (**Note:** names in the handout above are presented Japanese style, with the family name first.)

Twists: The shadowy figure the curator noticed was the Aku-Shin Kage partially manifesting each night the curator read the tome *Rock Garden on Infinity*. The avatar claimed the curator's soul on the fourth night, drawing it into the shadows forever. What the three haiku in the article cause is up to the keeper. Most likely they may prompt hundreds of nervous breakdowns and angry paranoid episodes, even a few heart attacks. Many readers will have half-remembered nightmares and vague disturbing thoughts for many days to come.

The live poetry reading, however, is highly dangerous as the haiku read in sequence as linked verse, or *renga*, are a Mythos ritual. If allowed, mayhem results when the blood-oozing armor of Aku-Shin Kage manifests from the shadows of the club to claim Hiroshi. Any witnesses will also share his fate. A packed house could mean up to a hundred in the audience.

A Kappa's Pity

Premise: In recent months, there have been an alarming number of drownings and bizarre water mishaps reported off the shores of subtropical Okinawa Prefecture. Unreliable accounts claim the culprits of these incidents to be umi-bohzu, restless spirits of drowned sailors or sea monsters.

Task: The investigators have been asked by Todai University VP Naoki Satô to look into the cases in Okinawa with hopes of debunking the wild claims or at least offering rational explanations for the deaths and mutilations. Hiro Fuji, Todai's resident underwater archeologist, has agreed to aid the player characters, and puts his facilities at their disposal. He will not become directly involved as long as the investigators follow Todai's guidelines.

Consequences: If the investigators follow Todai's directive to the letter, it shouldn't prove difficult to find natural causes for a few of the drownings, and dismiss all the incidents as normal events. However, too many of the remains have bizarre markings and complete blood loss. The bodies are savaged much more than accountable to carrion feeders such as crabs and seagulls. If the player characters investigate further, they will have to examine the wreckage of one of the two fishing ships that sank in the shallow waters off the coast. Prof. Fuji will allow the investigators to use a small boat but will not permit them to use the multi-million-dollar research vessel *Todai Maru 2* with its advanced sonar, dive gear, and robotic submersible. A dive to explore one of the sunken fishing vessels discovers that the ships were overwhelmed and the hulls destroyed from beneath the waterline. Something tore into the ships and killed the crews as the ships sank.

In addition to the two Japanese fishing trawlers, there are remains of a ship of Chinese or Taiwanese military registration, sunk only three months before and untouched by thieves. This ship too was overwhelmed and the crew slaughtered. Interestingly, they were well armed. A store of military issue weapons and ammunition still exists on board. The guns are salvageable after being dried, stripped, and oiled. If the investigators' underwater searches are prolonged, they encounter the kappa underwater kingdom and may come into direct conflict with the creatures.

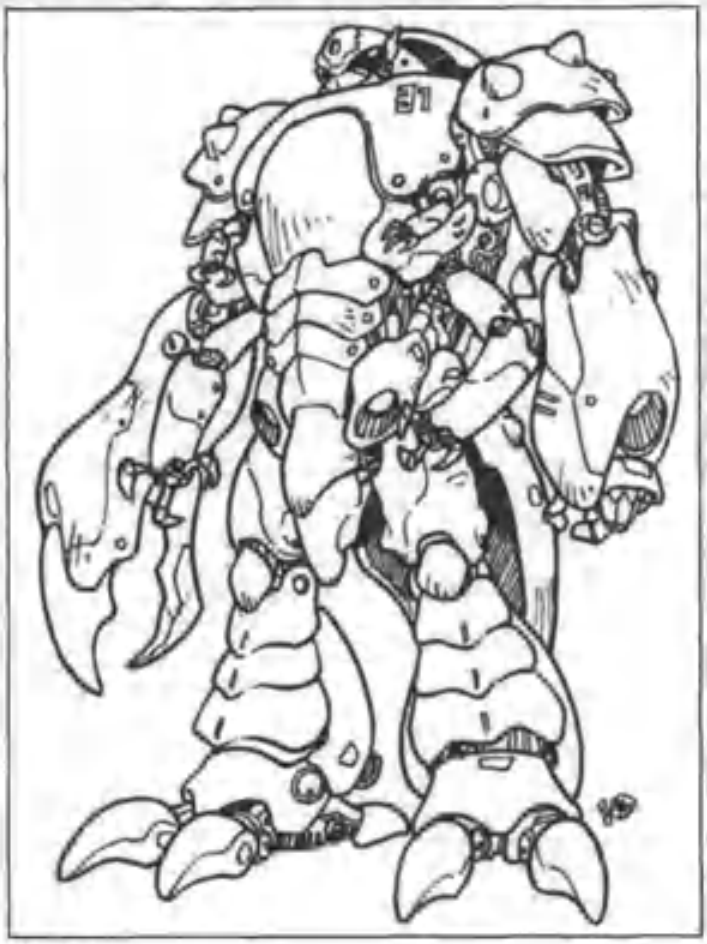
Twists: While a small number of the water mishaps can be chalked up to scavengers and the like, the majority of the attacks are by kappa who are being displaced from their underwater abodes by something near Yonaguni Island. The reason for this exodus could be the 7.4 magnitude earthquake that occurred several months ago just off the coast of Yonaguni Island. The aggressiveness of the kappa could be also due to a conflict with their cousins, the deep ones. Or perhaps the local kappa are restive because someone is trying to command them using passages from the Mythos tome *Supernaturalia Japonica*.

With their brutal mass attacks on fishing boats, swimmers, and coastal workers, the kappa have made restless the spirits of the murdered. A few of the more strong-willed souls are manifesting as yūrei and other forms of undead spirits like umi-bohzu, and are haunting the areas of their death.

If the investigators do any checking into Prof. Hiro Fuji or the *Todai Maru 2* they discover that the good professor was directly involved in an incident at the underwater Yonaguni Monument. The first multi-million dollar research vessel, the *Todai Maru*, was attacked by Chinese freebooters and sunk, as was the Chinese ship. (This is the same Chinese ship the investigators found.) The location of the wreckage of the *Todai Maru* can also be found, with some surreptitious examination of Todai's records. Investigators find evidence in the *Todai Maru* suggesting that it was part of a massive underwater excavation of the Yonaguni Monument. Prof Fuji's former ship quarters contain a map and journal fragments suggesting an underwater hunt for a chamber depicting the Mappo no Ryūjin. If asked directly about this the professor denies everything.

At the keeper's option, the investigators initiate direct contact with the kappa after discovering several of them dehydrated, weakened, and stranded onshore. In such a situation, a kappa will promise anything to return to the water. The player characters may be able to work out a truce with them, and gain the ability to breathe underwater for a limited time, in exchange for the humans' aid in fending off the attacks on their kingdom. The attacks on the kappa are from legions of ancient serpent people coming out of hibernation in the massive air-filled chambers of the Yonaguni Monument.

And, of course, being able to breathe underwater slowly turns the investigators into kappa. The investigators must beware of treachery at every turn.



SHIVA ONE

Measured Grace

Premise: A Psi-Mech scientist working on the Hachi-Rei bio-morph project, Doctor Ishi Kumato, has developed a bio-mech exoskeleton suit, Shiva One, based on back-engineered bio-morph technology. The performance of the suit was just beginning to attract attention among the higher echelons of Yotsubishi when a fatal explosion destroyed two levels of the Psi-Mech lab facility. Doctor Kumato's body was found in the wreckage but there was no trace of Shiva One.

Doctor Kumato's spotty lab notes discuss a trial experiment to give Shiva One an AI (artificial intelligence) response system by injecting mechanical nano-probes into its neuro-fiber pathways. Unreliable reports in Tokyo by common citizens indicate that Shiva One is on the loose and hiding in the city. The bio-mech does not yet appear to have harmed anyone. In fact, eyewitness reports say it has saved at least two lives.

The Shiva One suit stands ten feet tall and enables a person to perform great feats of physical strength and acrobatics. Bio-electrical weapons protect the Shiva One operator and allow it to engage in offensive actions. The Shiva helmet is linked to the operator's mind by quantum state transmission sensors. They detect and mirror movement impulses in the human brain, directing the bio-mech suit with near instantaneous response. The suit's titanium-chitin armor grants the operator 15 hit points of protection before the person inside Shiva One becomes threatened. It is also capable of limited underwater and space excursions. Chemical thrusters on the back allow impressive leaps of up to ten stories in height and great maneuvering speed as well, but do not allow flying or exiting the atmosphere. Natural

chemical interactions in the suit replenish all its systems and thruster fuel. For ideas on weapons systems see the non-player character entry for Agent Hachi-Rei.

Task: What has happened to the Shiva One Bio-Mech Suit? Was the lab explosion an accident or was it used to cover the theft of the suit? What is being done to recover Shiva One? These problems can be tackled in the course of the investigation.

Consequences: Yotsubishi executives are not sitting on their hands. In addition to outside and internal investigators, Yotsubishi leaders have assigned bio-morph Hachi-Rei to the search. She has orders to incapacitate and retrieve Shiva One. Also, what is the exact nature of this bio-mech technology? It should quickly become obvious that it is a mesh of alien technology from a Mythos race and blind human determination.

Twists: Dr. Kumato was recording imprints of his own memory engrams into the Shiva One suit for basic automated defense subroutines when the operator was incapacitated. He was utilizing mechanical nano-probes borrowed from another Psi-Mech division, a procedure detailed in the *Project Yūrei White Paper* HR-DVD. While undergoing this lengthy recording process, there was a lab break-in. A power surge overloaded the electronic monitoring systems in a cascading burst which set off fires throughout the lab. Soon explosions rocked the lab complex as the electrical fires ignited volatile bio-nutrients. The doctor died that night but Shiva One came on-line and escaped into the cold Tokyo night.

The unmanned Shiva One suit now has a life of its own. Instead of merely recording human limbic system information for breathing and motor functions, the lab mishaps and incompatibility of the mechanical nano-probes caused the total download of Doctor Kumato's life force into Shiva One.

The bio-mech suit's memory is fragmented, and the doctor does not yet realize who he is or what he has become. The nano-probes still in Shiva One's systems cause occasional malfunctions which register in the doctor's sentience as intense pain. This sends Shiva One into temporary bouts of extreme violence. He does have a basically good nature, though, and will act humanely while sane (presently SAN 30). Hachi-Rei will engage Shiva One in battle if she manages to locate the bio-mech suit. This could cause Shiva One's defensive weapons to come online and further increase the doctor's slide to insanity. No one knows what might happen were a human operator to wear the sentient Shiva One. Should the investigators attempt to preserve Shiva One, or put the poor doctor out of his misery?

The Paper Sky

Premise: Today underwater archeologists have recovered several incredible artifacts from the Yonaguni Monument site. Tokyo University has arranged to put the finds as well as other contemporaneous objects on public display using a clever re-creation of the chamber where the ancient treasures were originally found. (**Note:** this is *not* the same room as that depicted in the climax of the "Yonaguni Monuments" short story.) On exhibit are three metallic discs, the Misho-Tai, the twelve-foot-tall black jade Monolith of Okinawa, and one black jade egg that fits perfectly in the depressions on the chamber's east wall. An old friend of the investigators mentions this exhibit and expresses her reservations about it. Museum-goers are disconcerted or dismayed by the gruesome sensations generated by the re-creation. Currently, attendance at the Yonaguni exhibit is limited to VIPs and foreign dignitaries. On several occasions, something interesting has occurred when visitors from the imperial family—so far merely cousins and aunts—enter the exhibit; the air thickens and a greenish hue fills the chamber.

The three-story-tall facade constructed in the Tokyo Natural Museum duplicates what the archeologists term the "Ritual Chamber." Hydrostone walls and floor include the strange inscriptions carved in the original chamber, near the octagonal star with its depressions in the east wall, and around an artful copy of the central dragon carving. The floor faithfully renders circular pictograms believed to represent the universe and the epochs of the cosmos.

Task: The investigators are to look into who has erected this exhibit and why they spent so much time constructing a facsimile of a site saturated with mystic power. Can a ritual be performed in the museum copy? To what end? What are the powers of the artifacts on display? Why do the hydrostone inscriptions glow along with those on the Monolith? Why do some people feel distressed when they enter the exhibit?

Consequences: If the Yonaguni exhibit is not closed and disassembled, a strange lethargy and uneasiness will strike the thousands of tourists who visit the Tokyo Natural Museum every day.

Twists: The inscriptions near the octagonal star on the wall and the circles on the floor are in Mu'vian Naacal. Every person who passes through the exhibit is drained of 1D2 magic points which are stored in the jade egg. Every 10 magic points stored in the egg are converted to 1 POW. The Misho-tai and Monolith are both Mu'vian era versions of the *Shinwa Taizen*. The only way to extract information is by shining coherent light onto the surfaces of meteorite disks. Modern Japanese have as yet to discover this secret. The Dragon Lords will attempt to summon the ethereal form of a Great Old One, the Mappo No Ryūjin (see that entry on pages 255–257). The artifacts on display detect when those of imperial blood (those with serpent hybrid genes) are near. As in the real underwater chamber, those with blood reaching back to Mu'vian ancestors activate the ancient technology as though having an organic key.

Furthermore, the exhibit may be an imperfect copy of the Mu'vian ritual chamber, in which case the summoning will not work right. What happens instead is up to the keeper.

The Tea Which Burns

Premise: The investigators receive a telegram from someone claiming to be the Black Monk, who desires to meet with the player characters at Kyoto's Golden Pavilion. He has information of utmost importance.

Task: Do the investigators take this telegram at face value? If they go, whoever the mystery person may be, the meeting offers potentially useful leads on Mythos related issues. Will the investigators meet the Black Monk in a public place? Will they inspect the meeting place beforehand? What does the pavilion pertain to?

Consequences: If the investigators go to the meeting, they encounter an imposing person who insists on remaining in the shadows. At the end of the meeting, identification of the stranger as the Black Monk is still dubious. In exchange for the investigators' aiding him to peruse the *Tao Te Shōnxiān* in the occult collection of the Tokyo National Museum of History, he will tell them the time and location that the Ivory Stair will next materialize. The next day, the investigators are greeted on a dark Kyoto street by a different character who also claims to be the Black Monk. This one exudes menace. He drops a small packet of Tsk'l metal on the ground, and leaves. Another mystery.

Twists: A Taoist alchemist, Hideyoshi Matsutani, is desperate to achieve genuine immortality. He is not satisfied with merely following the Red Powder path to the Ivory Stair. According to his calculations, the Ivory Stair, a dimensional portal to the realm of the Jade Emperor, is due to open on the grounds of the Golden Pavilion in mere days. The problem is that the alchemist does not have the proper recipe for

the Red Powder of Immortality. That can be found only in the *Tao of Immortality*. Matsutani is willing to manipulate, lie to, or steal from the player characters to gain this tome.

Origami: Unfolding Silence

Premise: Since before WWII, itako, aged blind women of incredible shamanic power, have existed in self-imposed exile in caverns near the Lake of Ash in Aomori Prefecture. Harkening back to a matriarchal Japan ruled by Shinto shamans like Empress Pimiko, these itako predicted WWII and its terrible consequences. The shamans were ignored by the military government of the 1930s and 1940s. With no other choice, they retired to the dangerous Aomori caverns to form an enclave and embrace others with their strange gift of communication with the kami. The rare gift of prognostication is theirs: each itako's first prophetic vision is that of her death. Except for the occasional family member who seeks these aged mediums for aid in speaking with deceased loved ones, the itako have existed in obscurity and silence.

Now a delegation of itako have arrived in Tokyo and requested a personal audience with the emperor. They refuse to discuss their reasons. They wait patiently in quarters provided by Shinto shrines in the Tokyo area. Of itself, this has scholars in Tokyo buzzing with speculation and conjecture. As proof to imperial officials of the seriousness of their mission, one itako, the most ancient in the delegation, announces that her death in the immediate future will herald the coming of a great evil. A week later, the old shaman is discovered in her quarters brutally murdered, eviscerated in a horribly bestial way, just as she previously described that she would be.

Task: The investigators are called in by Tokyo University (Toda) to investigate the legitimacy of the itako' claims. The itako patiently sit in silence, still waiting for the emperor's official reply. Rumors abound of some great prophecy the itako have come to deliver to the nation of Japan. The investigators must find out if this is the true reason for the imperial visit and, if so, what consequence it bears for the world. A secondary task might be to discover what the itako prophecy is, if it does indeed exist. The murder of the itako elder also has a high priority for solution.

Consequences: The itako have indeed come to proffer a prediction, one for the emperor's ears only. They rightly believe that most sectors of governmental and corporate power are tainted by leaders controlled by astral serpents and other secret societies. The prediction itself is complex, with layer upon layer of unfolding key events triggering the next. One of the events which will happen in the near future is that outlined in the story of the Yonaguni Monuments and the great earthquake in Okinawa which reveals the Yonaguni underwater temple. Another portion of the prediction pertains to a threat to the imperial line and the genetic nature of the royal blood, hence the need to address the emperor. The Great Dragon of Mappo, the serpent people, and the Dragon Lords are involved somehow. If the keeper wishes, particulars of the prediction can be of his or her own crafting or something drawn directly from the *Shinsen Taizen*.

Twists: The investigators may commission the itako to do that which they do best—predict the future—but the shamans cannot be tricked into betraying their mission. Itako continually see into the future and can anticipate what a person will ask before they ask it. If an investigator is brave, he or she can ask the itako to foresee his or her death: the itako only reveals one aspect, either the means or the time. This offers an excellent chance for the keeper to be especially evil or clever. Does the investigator believe in fate? Will the prediction come to pass? If the death is particularly gruesome or involves a Mythos related beastie, the itako may suffer the full Sanity-sapping effects of witnessing that creature. The murder of the elder itako was orchestrated by the Black Monk. Further, he intends to silence the other waiting itako before the bureaucratic red tape parts and grants them audience with the emperor.

Funky Noodles

Premise: The investigators are in for a rare treat. A corporate associate of the investigators has called in a favor to secure tickets for audience seats on a highly popular live Japanese television show called *The Steel Chef*. The investigators have front row seats. Two master chefs compete with their culinary skills. In an hour, each chef must prepare an exquisite five or six course dinner from scratch. The meals are taste-tested by a panel of TV celebrities, politicians, comedians, literati, starlets, and music talents. Tonight the host of *Steel Chef* has a special theme: "The Bounty of the Sea." Unknown to the host or the master chefs, someone has switched the four trays of raw ingredients (living octopus, squid, sea cucumber, and sea urchin) with more exotic fare of a Mythos flavor.

Task: That depends upon what the investigators try to accomplish. They can intervene on live television (save the TV crew and guests, help the audience to the exits, or even do battle with the beasties), stand by and do nothing, or try to minimize the impact on the viewing public (like pulling out the camera cable feed).

Consequences: This can be run as a one-nighter or evolve into a full campaign as investigators strive to discover who switched the ingredients. If the investigators merely watch as events unfold on live Japanese television, the viewing public is exposed to a potentially sanity threatening experience. Viewers may believe them to be special effects, but still exceptionally terrifying. TV viewers suffer 10% of the Sanity losses indicated by the actual costs to witness. Small black squiggly things leap out of the preparation dishes or extend their tentacles to create a gory orgy of destruction, savaging cooks and celebrities. Blood is everywhere. The soup of the day has its day! If the investigators leap into action, the production crew may mistake them for terrorists in the chaos. Live TV might also record the investigators' actions and hesitations for all across Japan to see (like the police), as well as see any spells they use against the Mythos dishes. Investigators who cut the live feed before they do battle or crowd control make the best out of the situation.

Twists: The player characters should not automatically know that the TV show is being broadcast live. The kind of creatures that are small enough to fit in bowls but entertaining enough to unleash upon the *Steel Chef* arena are up to the keeper, of course. If struggling for suggested beasties for a fun evening of television: baby kappa, yôkai versions of sea animals like octopi which immediately grow to monstrous proportions, chthonian hatchlings, formless spawn, or whatever else the keeper's twisted imagination can envision. Another mystery is how the perpetrator put the Mythos creatures in the bowls—were they gated in or somehow placed in stasis until their containers were opened? Keepers can have real fun with the dramatic maiming or deaths of the chefs and gourmet guests getting their just deserts (or desserts, as the case may be).

SHifting Grains

Premise: An experiment scheduled for the Japanese "Kibo" module ("Hope") on the international space station has been intentionally compromised by an over-ambitious Psi-Mech scientist. Unable to attain approval of his project through normal channels, he has developed fifth generation self-replicating nano-probes he calls Dragon's Teeth. The nano-probes are theoretically able to establish a micro-net and possibly quantum computer sentience. However, this advancement

is only verifiable in micro-gravity. The scientist is unaware that there has been meddling in his nano-probe designs by the Tick Tock Man, an avatar of Nyarlathotep.

Task: The investigators must stop the experimental pallet before it is shipped to Florida's Cape Canaveral in the United States. The pallet contains various native Japanese fish species (including a genus of goby suggested by the emperor) to determine if they can survive and spawn successfully under weightless conditions. The nanoprobes are stowaways in the gobies.

Consequences: If the nano-probes reach orbit, they quickly replicate and multiply. They spread into all of the electronic systems of the International Space Station and achieve a critical threshold, establishing artificial sentience. Unchecked, the intelligence infects Houston Control's communications system, then the national defense grid of the United States and from there, the Internet.

Twists: Lurking in the world communications systems, the AS (artificial sentience) becomes a world spanning alien intelligence on the order of *The Forbin Project's* Colossus or *The Terminator's* Skynet. The sentience could even evolve into an embryonic Great Old One. Since the Dragon's Teeth are a technological corruption of the Mythos, one possible way to stop it if it spreads across the world is with another digital item, a spell taken from the *Project Yūrei White Paper* HR-DVD.

Inflammable Monks

Extinguishing the flame of desire.

Premise: Something is causing monks throughout the ancient capital of Kyoto to set themselves on fire. Droves of monks walk into public places and calmly sit in seiza position. After several minutes in meditation and chanting a strange mantra, the priests spontaneously burst into flames. They do not cry out in pain. Instead, they continue to chant until no longer physically able. The fire burns so hot and consumes the monks so quickly that there is little that can be done to save them. Strangely, combustibles only a few feet away do not catch fire.

Task: The player characters are to investigate what is causing these strange acts of self destruction. What is the mantra they are chanting? How are they spontaneously combusting?

Consequences: While the investigators look into this enigma, they are able to witness the spectacle first hand. If they can find a way to extinguish the flames before a monk dies, they may get some useful information out of the priests they rescue. While all Buddhist sects are represented among the burning monks, there seems to be a preponderance of Tendai and Shingon priests among the dead.

Twists: There are three possible causes for the human torches. The Emerald Mandala is to blame. The Avatar Mara is tempting monks by causing them to seek Nirvana in a destructive way. A copy of *The Forbidden Sutra* has reached general distribution among the Buddhist clergy; those who read it are having all illusions washed away by the true enlightenment of the Mythos. One thing is verifiable—the mantra chanted by the monks is a Mythos spell. Any who chant Mara's Mantra burst into flames while achieving a total extinguishment of the spirit. No one can be sure where the life force or ki energy (POW) of the priests is going, but two good bets are that the ki is directly siphoned into Azathoth's court or utilized by Mara or the Emerald Lama for some purpose.

Mara's Mantra

Om, Timeless Wisdom
Mani, Illusionary Embrace
Padme, Desire Burns
Satvi, Life Fuels
Chandi, Pure Flame
Hum, Extinguish Illusion

Fallen Petals

Premise: A group of four young female college students are bored with their studies. They are, however, excited about a trendy fictional Japanese television drama about Western spellcraft called *Fallen Petals*. The four young women scour Japanese bookstores for anything about the Western occult. To their misfortune they chance upon a partial copy of the *Necronomicon* and quickly buy it from the equally clueless used book shop, Furui Hon. The owner will later profess ignorance as to how he obtained the copy. With the four women barely able to read the English language, much less ancient European ones, based upon what they have seen on TV they still manage to gather materials and ingredients they theorize are needed for a casting circle. Nothing more can be determined from the scanty evidence other than the fact that the women vanished from their shared apartment. Several friends of the women have gone missing as well. One of the more gruesome discoveries was a human finger with a ring still attached to the severed knuckle.

Task: The investigators need to determine what has happened to the unfortunate women and their fellow female students. The player characters are also to recover the *Necronomicon* if possible.

Consequences: A circle of power of red chalk and melted candles is still inscribed upon the tatami mat floor of the girls' living room. Blood splattering the rice paper dividers to the room remains fresh (it does not dry). The *Necronomicon* is nowhere to be found in the apartment. Left unchecked, more female students at the two year school will go missing. Investigation into the missing friends of the four

women reveals that they were not on good terms. In fact, the missing friends looked down mockingly on the four women.

Twists: The four girls have received their wish for power and have been whisked away by a byakhee to Shamballah. There the Emerald Lama has promised them unlimited power in exchange for "their spirits for enlightenment." The four women have the power of invisibility for some limited duration as well as ESP talents like telekinesis and pyrokinesis powers. They have styled themselves after their Western-media-saturated impressions of a witches' coven.

The Dying Flame

Premise: Most Asian cultures have long accepted reincarnation as fact. Western investigators have not been so ready to take this idea at face value. Over the course of other scenarios the keeper provides undeniable proof that reincarnation, rinne, exists, by means of episodes in which people from the past are proven to exist in people living today. Other ways to provide evidence of existence beyond death are through yūrei, pretas, and Shinto priests talking to the deceased and kami. The investigators are invited to a Zen Buddhist meditation hall for a weekend retreat.

Task: When they arrive at the Zen retreat, the investigators are told that a special guest speaker, a Tibetan lama, is to present a lecture on Sunday, the last day of the retreat. The lecture is on the nature of the undying spirit. Rumors are that the guest might be the Dalai Lama himself. But first the guests are to undergo two days of austerities as they follow the daily routines and duties of career priests.

Consequences: When the lecture begins on Sunday in the meditation hall, the dozen people attending the retreat file in first and sit cross-legged in the lotus position. After several minutes of meditation, a monk in tattered green robes enters, his face covered by a draping hood. The lama's voice is soft and commanding. Most of the guests find themselves mesmerized: roll POW x3 or less for player characters to retain their wits.

Seating himself at the front of the hall, the lama speaks on the illusion of the wheel of life. All people think they have a soul, but what they really need is release from suffering. The lama can offer that release, the extinction of the life force in order to reach the state of Nirvana. Those who meditate while listening to the lama's voice and looking at his shimmering robes are unable to move.

One man rises himself and attempts to flee the hall. He is met by two men in bright green robes. They haul the panicked man before the lama. The lama stands and removes his hood to reveal his alien form. He is the Emerald Lama! The cost is 1D3/1D10 Sanity points to see him. Using the Embrace of the Lama, the entity drains the victim's life force, his soul. Its green glow makes its dissipation visible to all. Witnessing this death costs the viewer 1D2/1D4+1 Sanity points. The Emerald Lama continues his lecture while draining another random guest's life force, which this time is absorbed into the lama's third eye. Of the dwindling audience, each loses 1D3/1D6+1 Sanity points more for the death that concludes the lama's talk. His lecture finished, the lama strolls out of the hall, leaving the survivors still immobilized. When at last the trance is broken, neither the Emerald Lama nor his henchmen are anywhere to be found.

Twists: As the guest speaker, the Emerald Lama kills one person but lets that soul go free, while permanently extinguishing the spirit of a second person. All who witnessed the scene and lost Sanity points gain an immediate "Thirst for Enlightenment." They dedicate every waking moment to seeking out information on the Emerald Lama. The obsession dies when the survivor gains as many Cthulhu Mythos points as he or she lost in Sanity points while witnessing the avatar of Hastur's murder of the two men.

Snow Falling on Corpses

Premise: A second subterranean chamber has been found in the Mozu kofun mound of Prince Nintoku on the Yamato Plain (Kinki region). The prince's burial chamber was constructed over a much more ancient grave which many experts believe to contain some of the oldest recorded remains of the imperial line. Early research indicates that the entombed female was very likely a shaman empress, dating to an era when Japanese society was still matriarchal. Politically controversial and left low key in the media, the archeological discovery suggests that the Japanese are in fact of Korean stock and the colonizers of the archipelago. The contents of the dig site have been quietly moved to the far north—to the remote Hokkaido Ainu Museum, the Porotokotan, in Hokkaido's capital, snowy Sapporo. This move has angered the native Ainu population. It is yet one more insult to the Ainu people by the ethnic Japanese since the Ainu defeat at the Battle of Kunasiri-Menasi (1789). Attempts by the media to stifle the public protests of the Ainu have reached the investigators. Something strange is going on.

Task: The investigators fly to Sapporo and interview the Ainu to learn their grievances and investigate the kofun remains. The representative of the Ainu is a feisty gray-eyed daughter of the Ainu chieftain. The Ainu are of Caucasoid stock, though they also have intermarried with the Japanese for centuries.

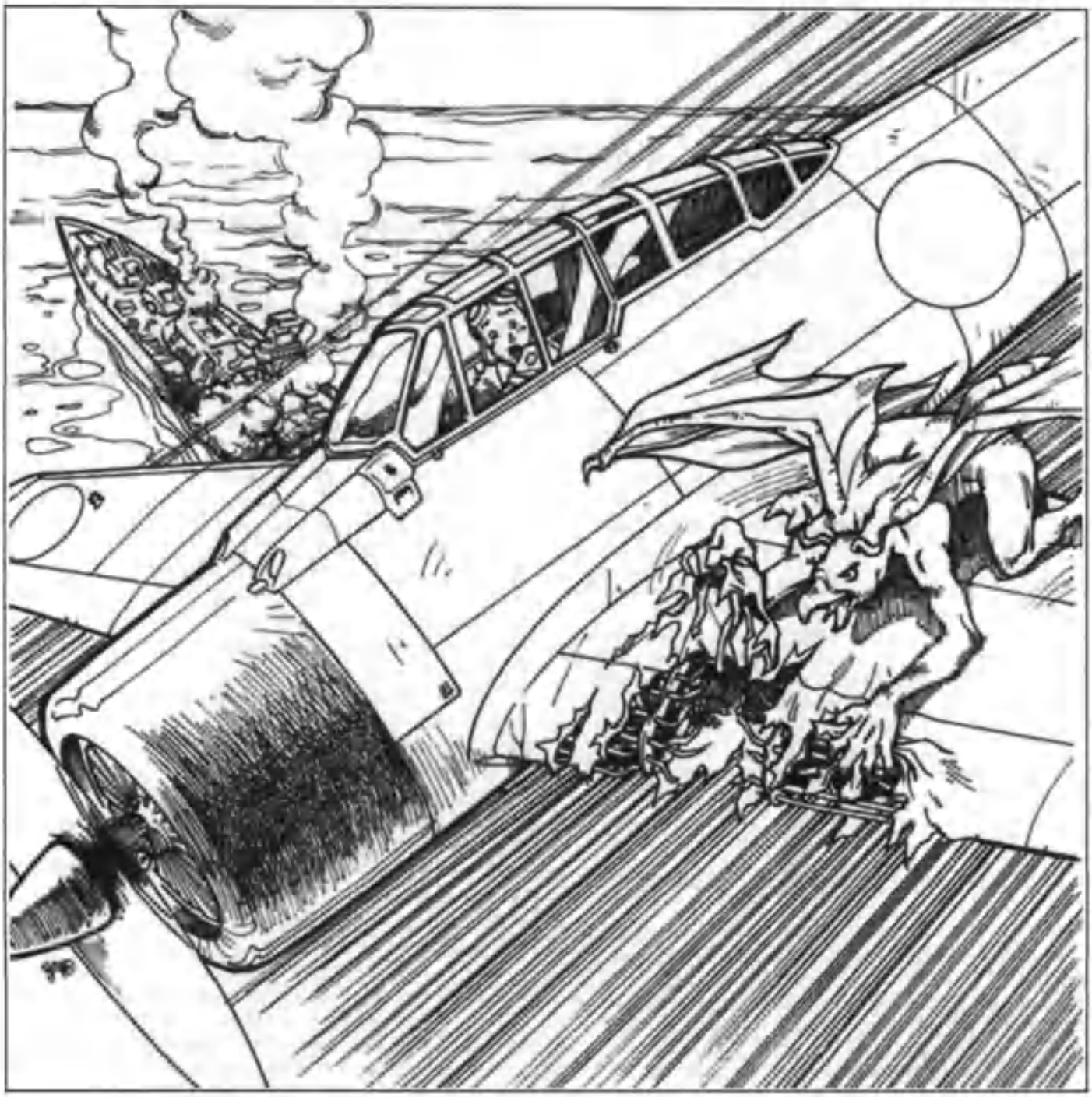
Consequences: The Ainu chieftain says the last refuge of its people on Japan will not be tainted by the remains of the very Yamato rulers who wiped out their culture. Despite the best efforts by their tribal heroes, the *yukar*, the Yamato people still drove the Ainu to the northern sub-arctic region of Hokkaido. The spirit of the land is angry and vengeance must be answered.

The Ainu Nation has assembled to perform a ceremony for sending spirits back—the *iyomante* ceremony usually reserved for returning bear spirits to the spirit world. It is hoped that, performed on a grand scale, iyomante will send back the Yamato spirits, the *kamuy*. The most important part of the ceremony, the sword dance to banish evil, the *emush rimse*, is planned by the Ainu elders for the night of New Moon, outside the Ainu Museum.

The day after the player characters arrive, two museum security guards are thought to have been killed. All that can be recovered of them at the Ainu Museum is viscera smeared on the walls. The kofun treasures are undamaged.

Twists: The move of the kofun burial remains from their resting place in the Kinki district, home of the Imperial Family for millennia, also disturbed the kami protecting the dead empress. The remains are in fact the burial chamber contents of a first generation Japanese descendent of the Muvian sorcerer priests, the Empress Pimiko. Until the Hokkaido move, the treasures of Pimiko were kept under lock and key due to several horrible unsolved murders of night staff in Nara. The Ainu have invoked their protector spirits to guard their people and the Ainu homeland, the *Ainu Moshir*. The Ainu ritual during the New Moon is close in form and content to the ancient Yamato shaman ritual which invokes the spirit of Pimiko. That Yamato ritual causes the possession of the nearest gray-eyed female Japanese with the spirit of Pimiko, who will again walk the earth. Within the Pimiko treasure, the items responsible for the bloodshed are two dogu clay figurines. On the New Moon, the figurines release two hunting horrors who protect Empress Pimiko.

Scroll Five, Section Three



One of many unreported Mythos incidents from World War Two.

SECTION THREE:

ONE STEP BEYOND

Ideas for keepers wishing to take the Japanese setting beyond the parameters offered in this book.

Historical Scenarios

Never wonder why some things remain mysteries.
—Buddha on his deathbed to his followers,
The Forbidden Sutra.

"At the time people do deeds, they do not think about how history will remember them. They are more concerned with what can be gained for now. Some do think on consequences, but most simply react to events as they unfold. Most people are fools and that's why we are here."
—Infernal Oni Lord Daraku to the monk Joken,
Jigoku Zoshi.

Being a sourcebook for modern Japan, space is not available to do more than touch on the mood and setting for other periods in Japan. That is not to say that other eras don't offer fascinating possibilities. Much of Japan's mythological world and supernatural inhabitants are timeless in nature, so that keepers wishing to run in differing eras need not make too much modification there. From the thirteenth century to the 1860s, little changed in customs and attire other than minor weapon improvements and the names of temporal rulers. For the proper mood, visit the local library and get a book on the desired era of Japanese history to learn about relevant events and period dress.

Feudal Japan (1185-1600)

Mixing Mythos intrigues with feudal Japan makes for engaging possibilities. Watch a few old samurai dramas and use the information in this book; it shouldn't be too difficult to run a one-night scenario set in feudal Japan. The material on investigator occupations on pages 49–52 and 54–55 and the archaic weapon information on pages 84–86 can help in designing a scenario set in old Japan. A trip to a bookstore or library or a quick viewing of the movie *Shōgun* might be in order. Even renting a Kurosawa classic like *Yojimbo*, or *47 Ronin*, or a bloodfest like *Lone Wolf and Cub* are promising avenues to set a samurai mood.

Tokugawa Japan (1600-1868)

Considered by natives to be a golden cultural age and two hundred years of peace, in actuality it was two hundred years of shōgunate military rule with Japan's borders closed to any outside contact. The closing of the borders kept out the foreign influences of Christian missionaries, Portuguese and English traders, and every sort of dangerous idea. The only bastion of the West was on a tiny island in Nagasaki Harbor, where a small contingent of Dutch traders were allowed to establish a permanent base.

The Confucian caste of the feudal era was systematized and rigidly enforced by the warrior elite. The emperor was a mere figurehead of state. Only samurai were permitted to wear the katana/wakazashi blade pair in their hakama. Peasants were not allowed to possess weapons of any kind. It was in this era that spies learned to use peasant tools as weapons, giving birth to the ninja. Meanwhile, samurai severed few if any heads on the battleground. Samurai became the bureaucrats of the Tokugawa system, acting as judges and policemen. Most were encouraged to nurture aspects of the so-called "civilized warrior" by Zen Buddhism, the austere sect sponsored by the shōgunate. They practiced ink calligraphy, tea ceremony, haiku, and even flower arranging, still popular ways of rounding out an individual in modern Japan.

It was in this era that art forms such as kabuki and noh theater, Hokusai's ukiyo-e woodblock prints, and shamisen and koto music came to the fore. Crafts such as the pottery used for tea ceremony utensils also developed, marking the importation of Korean craftsmen.

Travel within the country was highly restricted. Travelers were required to always carry permission papers issued by the local ruling lord, the daimyō. Only religious pilgrimages were permitted to the non-warrior castes and so religion became very important—if only to get a chance to travel and see the countryside. One famous route was the eighty-eight temple circuit on Shikoku Island. It could take three or more months on foot. On the largest island of Honshu, most pilgrims used the only main road, the Tokkaido, which stretched between the military capital of Edo and the religious capital of ancient Kyoto. This post highway offered food and lodgings at two mile intervals. Samurai also waited there, to check the permit papers of travelers.

Closing the borders became a final miscalculation on the part of the Tokugawa Shōgunate. Of course, there were repeated attempts by Western countries to open the borders for trade, but the linchpin was in 1853 when American Commodore Perry arrived in his black iron ships. Perry demanded that Japan open its borders for trading with the West or have them forcibly opened, possibly even colonized. When the shōgunate officials witnessed the two-hundred-year disparity of technology between their people and the Western Devils, they quickly acceded to an unbalanced trade pact which Japan worked hard to rectify by catching up technologically with the West in the Meiji Era. The arrival of the Black Boats weakened the *shōgunate's* grip on power by spurring civil rebellion. By 1868 the emperor was crowned as the head of state and rightful ruler of Japan.

In The Mythos

Two hundred years of closed borders leaves open a great many possibilities for development by the enterprising keeper. Perhaps the Ahu-Shin Kage or mighty Cthulhu secretly pulled strings within the military dictatorship or conducted grand experiments with the people of Japan. If the keeper wishes to use native Japanese characters, then the Dreamlands guide (to be published in a future book) or a well-stocked library will provide ample information on the caste system, weapons, and tools for this era.

One easy suggestion would be to have a group of samurai constables in Edo or in some smaller daimyō's city encounter traces of a Mythos crime. After all, the bakufu correctly assumed the taint of evil was from outside the country, but is proved to be from outer space, not from another nation.

Perhaps the shōgunate is well aware of the threat Mythos cults present, but keeps it quiet. Much like the modern UFO conspiracies, the shōgunate might stifle attempts to uncover the truth by its own samurai bureaucrats—some even will be corrupted themselves. The Yakuza and particularly the Dragon Lords are in their heyday. Admired by the peasants as local heroes and rebels in this era, this secret society would be a most powerful adversary.

For those wishing to play foreigners, options are limited, but possible. Language is also a great barrier in this era. The Dutch do exist in Nagasaki but are strictly controlled (despite that, it was from here that a translation of *The Sitah King* came to the West). Chinese are trading partners. Koreans are marginal allies, though more often enemies. Shipwrecked foreign sailors are likely to be beheaded by the local daimyō when discovered, unlike in James Clavell's novels where they are treated like kings. It is rumored that a final band of foreigners survives in the forest. Astonished villagers catch a glimpse now and then, and may mistake them for ninja. Opportunities abound.

Meiji Japan (1868-1912)

On the cusp of modernization, this era is only thirty years after Commodore Perry ended Japan's two-hundred-year isolationist policies. Much is in turmoil as samurai fight to maintain power even while their very class ceases to officially exist. Meanwhile, the government begins an intensive crash-course in Westernization, sending large contingents of its brightest overseas to learn the ways of the West. In addition, many Western scholars are warmly welcomed in Japan to teach at newly formed universities and hospitals.

Six years before the turn of the century, Japan makes its first bid to imitate the colonialism of the West. The Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) begins. This is followed shortly afterwards by the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), wherein Japan soundly defeats the Great Bear. During this time (1895–1910), Korea, the cruz of the two wars, comes firmly under Imperial Japan's rule.

Lafcadio Hearn arrives in Tokyo. *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) establishes his reputation as a writer on Japan.

Things long concealed and better left hidden are revealed in the cold light of Western science. Many dramatic supernatural incidents occur in front of large public gatherings but are written off as end-of-the-century hysteria and peasants' superstitions.

The Meiji Emperor

In 1867–68, the Tokugawa Era ended in the Meiji Restoration. Emperor Meiji was moved from Kyoto to Tokyo, which became the new capital; his imperial power was restored. The actual political power was transferred from the Tokugawa Bakufu into the hands of a small group of nobles and former samurai who formed a group of unmachable elder statesmen known as the *Genrō*, who set policy and spoke for the emperor's interests well into the Taishō Era.

1890s Japan

The 1890s are the cusp of the Meiji Restoration. Some of the well-to-do will be in bowler hats. Most Japanese still dress in kimonos. Samurai are still a presence, but one that is being left obsolete by the modernization movement.

There is much strife and assassination afoot. The traditional Tokugawa Shōgunate government has been replaced by a Western model government in only the last half dozen years. People are still very much mired in medieval ways. Nonetheless, the stifling hierarchy of the Edo Period is gone. Opportunity awaits for those willing to grab it.

This is also a time when many old traditions and superstitions are being heedlessly discarded in favor of the Western way of doing things. A tension exists for many creatures in the shadows. These are their last days before the light of scientific reason exposes every corner of the old supernatural world.

Foreigners, the *jutei*, are welcome, if marginally so. If they have something to offer, they are given a good job and much respect. Depending on their outlook, the general populace may never have seen such oddities, and may act with suspicion and fear at the outset—or may be overjoyed and highly inquisitive.

Medieval values, equipment, and institutions are still in place. Those players wishing to play samurai can do so—the catch is that this venerable class is in the process of being phased out of existence. It is the merchants who run the show and bask in the influx of wealth. Most samurai are without income; many instigate uprisings in this era.

Foreign investigators will find that they are valued for their knowledge and treated well. They must be careful not to take the attitude that the Japanese are unformed savages to be saved by science or missionary endeavors, as did so many of their Western counterparts of the era.

In most senses, 1890s Japan is backward compared to other parts of the world. Japan has been isolated from the rest of the world for almost 300 years. It is just waking from its long slumber. Being an Asian country that values tradition, old ways will die hard in Japan.

Taisho Japan (1912-1925)

Despite the sad news of Emperor Meiji's death in 1910 and the ascension to the throne of young and inexperienced Emperor Taisho, Japan is flush with pride after victories in three regional wars—the Sino-Japanese, the Russo-Japanese, and the annexation of Korea. With rumors of Emperor Taisho suffering from mental illness and engaging in endless debauched parties, the imperial military steps in to take the reins of power. The nation begins to slip into ultra-fascism and ideals of racial purity. These attitudes are at their darkest in the 1930s and 1940s, during the Pacific War, called the Fifteen Year War by the Japanese. Foreigners are not yet being detained or asked to leave Japan, but Japanese do start to exude superiority to peoples in less powerful nations, especially Asiatic ones.

The year 1923 sees one of the worst earthquakes in the modern history of Japan, killing thousands in urban Tokyo. Soon after, riots and fires break out to devastate the rest of Tokyo. Whispers say that occultists attempted a ritual that stirred but did not wake something slumbering in Tokyo Bay; possibly even the great Millennial Dragon.

Famous Personages and Literature

A man once approached me on the road to ask directions to Kyoto. A man short in stature, no greatness seemed to cling to him. He humbly thanked me and continued on his way. It wasn't until much later that I was told it was none other than Musashi, the great swordsman. If he had known who I was he might have easily slain me on the spot. He may well have known—I'll never know, but I vowed on that day to never be caught unaware by first appearances.

—The Black Monk, *The Mysterious Path.*

There are many excellent fairy tales, fables, and stories in Japanese, and many concern the supernatural and even can be classified as horror tales. An enterprising keeper can rip these for good scenario ideas.

If the keeper has a favorite Japanese tale or historical character he or she wishes to bring into the mix, that certainly adds a greater level of believability and depth to the game. For famous works like the *Tale of Genji* (also known as *Genji Monogatari*), or the *47 Ronin*, incorporating an element of horror isn't too difficult. Many of these stories feature visitations by Buddhas, kami, and the eventual death and dismemberment of the main characters. Why they would decide to do such desperately destructive things to themselves need not take much imagination by an individual well versed in the Mythos.

Below are a few well-known Japanese historical figures and stories with suggested Cthulhu Mythos spins that could be given to them. Read the work in full to get the most from it. Odds are that the players will have no idea that the keeper has based a scenario/campaign on a literary work. While it may require a bit of effort, the keeper benefits from using a setting and environment rich in culture and atmosphere, as well as having access to detailed, three-dimensional non-player characters for the scenario.

Nara and Heian Eras (794–1185)

Genji Monogatari by Lady Murasaki Shikibu (980–1014)

Epic in length, this novel is one of the most treasured works of Japanese literature. It was one of the first books written in native Japanese, hiragana, and by a female author. The book is about Hikaru Genji, born of the emperor and a low ranking wife. Genji is the perfect man, gifted with looks, talent, and noble character. The novel details his extravagant love affairs in his youth, for which he is later repentant (this may also be the world's first romance novel). Many episodes in the book paint life in the opulent Heian court quite effectively, as well as Genji's brushes with the supernatural. In one scene the spirit of a jealous lover scares Genji and his new conquest during a tryst, resulting in Genji's new lover dying of fright.

Using this story as backdrop, a keeper can evoke a Japanese version of gothic horror. As a son of the emperor, there might also be darker secrets in Genji's blood, like his direct lineage to Muvian high priests. Naming, the art of Kotodama, was also widely used by court nobles in this era to strike at enemies.

Kôbô Daishi KUKAI (774–835)

A historical figure, this priest was said to perform all manner of mystical feats through his mastery of esoteric Buddhism. In his youth, he was said to have had a contest of wills with a priest of another temple who had trapped the essence of a water tatsu, a wata-tsumi, in a jar, causing a drought. Kukai dispelled the curse and released the dragon. Dissatisfied with the corrupt teaching at Kyoto's Mount Hiei, he left after staying only a few short months. Following his eighteenth birthday, he set off to visit China. After returning, he won the confidence of both Chinese and Japanese emperors and became one of the most renowned priests of Buddhism. In China, he had thrown his favorite staff at the sea towards Japan and later found this to have landed at Mount Koya in Shikoku. There he founded the Shingon sect of Buddhism. He made a pilgrimage around Shikoku Island and marked eighty-eight sacred spots in his travels. He was said to bring forth natural springs by merely striking his staff on the ground, such as at Dogu Onsen. Eighty-eight Shingon temples were later founded on his pilgrimage route, which is still walked to this day.

Today he is regarded as the equivalent of a saint in Japan. There was little that Kukai might not be able to do. It would not be surprising if he still exists in some form, either as a kami or an immortal in the Dreamlands.

Taira-no-Masakado (?–940)

A military commander of the middle Heian Period. Taira belonged to a powerful family of the Kantô district, now Tokyo. Noted for his zeal and bravery, he brought most of Kantô under his control by the sword. He proclaimed himself to be Shinnô, the new emperor. Taira later died following a surprise attack by a local clan.

As he did not attain his goal in becoming emperor of Japan, Masakado's spirit has not rested easily since his death. Legend has it that his severed head is buried in one of several memorial mounds around Tokyo, including one tomb at the famous Kanda-Myôjin Shrine, which is dedicated to Masakado. The head mound is the supposed spot where the warlord's severed head landed after execution. An apparition of his floating head with a terrifying visage is said to appear at the mound when he is displeased with the state of affairs in Tokyo. An ancestral kami, Masakado still haunts the core of Tokyo, plotting to reclaim it as his own. On the anniversary of his execution, strange events are said to occur within the Kantô district. Backroom gossip states that on the thousandth year anniversary of his death, 1940, this spirit set into motion the drive to colonize Asia. So began WWII. (See also the description of Mr. Kuro on page 200.)

Feudal Era (1185–1600)

The 47 Ronin

This classic tale is quintessentially Japanese. The story is so wrapped in myth and hearsay it's difficult to sort historical event from embellishment. One version states that in 1702, 47 retainers of the Akô clan avenged their master, Asano Takumi-no-kami, one year and nine months after his death. There is also speculation that the 47 Ronin were never samurai but were, in fact, ninja. The most popular retellings follow this arc: A daimyô, having taken offense, calls out a powerful lord and kills him in a clash. The fallen lord's 47 retainers, with the loss of their master, become ronin. So loyal are they to their dead master that they seek revenge on the scheming daimyô. In the end, they exact their revenge but are honor-bound to commit seppuku.

Perhaps the reason for their master's death was contrived. Alternatively, maybe they could not rest, masterless after their deaths, and fell into service with the Aku-Shin Kage, the Dark Warlord. They are now each powerful onryô in their own right: these black-angels act as his emissaries in the shadows of modern Japan.

Heike Monogatari

The events of *Heike Monogatari* are based on the factual Gempei War (dating around 1147–1200) between two real life clans: the Minamoto (or Genji) Clan and the Taira (or Heike) Clan. This is where the Kamakura Period (1192–1333), ruled by shôguns from these clans, gets its name.

Numerous myths and wives' tales of the ghosts and unrestful sites of battle from this conflict persist in Japan to this day. This story offers rich background for many yôkai and hotoke tales set in the present.

Musashi Miyamoto (?–1645)

The author of the famous book on military strategy, *Gorin-no-sho (The Book of the Five Rings)*, Musashi also was famous for his sixty consecutive sword duel victories. In the later Edo Period, a great many tales sprang up about Musashi's prowess in the many death-duels he fought. From such tales serializations soon sprang. If a keeper is looking for accounts of the quintessential samurai warrior and Bushidô ethic in practice, *Five Rings* and accounts of Musashi's life are highly recommended reading. Even today, many salarymen consider themselves modern counterparts to samurai. *The Book of the Five Rings* is required reading in training seminars of some larger Japanese companies.

Musashi's ability with the sword was uncanny. Some described it as supernatural. Possibly his ability was derived in part by research into forbidden knowledge or a dark pact with a Mythos servitor. (See pages 132–133 for the entry on *The Sixth Ring*.)

Nobunaga Oda (1534–1582)

A famous haiku poem best characterizes Nobunaga:
Naka nu nara Koroshi shite mae Ho to togigu.
The cuckoo doesn't sing? All right, kill it or sing!
—Who's Who of Japan.

Born in Owari Province, present Aichi Prefecture, Oda Nobunaga grew up during the Sengoku Period, the son of a lesser feudal lord in a region dominated by daimyô with massive fiefs. Neighbouring warlords incessantly attempted to acquire the valuable resources of his clan's land through force. This environment honed Nobunaga into an ambitious and talented strategist. In his adulthood, Nobunaga strove, along with Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, to reunify Japan. As a youth, Nobunaga often acted erratically, dressing as a dishevelled beggar. After a shocking incident at his father's funeral, his samurai teacher blamed himself for his student's irresponsible behavior and committed hara-kiri. This event served as a turning point in young Oda's life and thereafter he dedicated himself completely to the art of Bushidô.

His warrior's trademark was strategic unpredictability. In one early battle commanding a mere 2,000 men, Nobunaga defeated Daimyô Imagawa Yoshimoto's army of 25,000 strong. Upon the enemy's arrival, Nobunaga was within his castle doing a bizarre dance while singing on the short span of men's lives. Outside, a storm flooded the battlegrounds. Nobunaga quickly maneuvered a surprise attack on Imagawa's army, achieving a complete rout and greatly increasing Nobunaga's reputation.

Nobunaga's methods were ruthless, as evidenced during the later Nagashino Campaign against Takeda Katsuyori, where he was forced to deal with a superior enemy mounted on horseback, the most formidable troops of the era. In response, Nobunaga built various trenches and pit traps to slow the equine advance. Hidden within the trenches he positioned three lines of musketeers to decimate the horsemen. This was the first time guns were used in large-scale battle in Japan; the result was a wholesale slaughter of unprepared attackers. A much more terrible incident occurred when believers of the Ikkô-shû sect of Buddhism tried to bring arms against Nobunaga. In response, the warlord directed a wooden wall be erected around the stronghold of the 20,000 religious fanatics. Trapped within their own fortress, Nobunaga set fire to the structure from all sides, burning to death every man, woman, and child. After many such bloody conflicts, he ruled much of eastern Japan.

Leading his forces to the western half of Japan with the goal of unifying the whole country, he stopped at Honnô-ji Temple to rest with a small contingent of seventy retainers. Akechi Mitsuhidé, a lesser ranked samurai in command of 10,000 soldiers loyal to him, attacked his commander unaware. Stunned by this treachery and trapped within the burning temple, Nobunaga committed suicide.

Nobunaga's sanity was questionable even at an early age, and the death of his samurai teacher left a void in his unstable life. The Aku-Shin Kage, who up to that point had entertained himself with instigating Sengoku by playing daimyô against each other, now filled the vacuum. Following the advice of his unholy liege-lord, Nobunaga gained success after success in battle—no matter how brutal the method was. In the process, the warlord began to take on the aspects of an avatar. The Dark Warlord arranged for Oda's assassination because he saw other uses for Nobunaga and unifying Japan was not in the avatar's plans. Finding Nobunaga too valuable to let go into the final abyss of death, the Aku-Shin Kage enlisted the aid of a powerful Kotodama master to resurrect Nobunaga as a kyonshi. Over the ensuing centuries, the black statue holding Nobunaga's spirit has been much sought by those scrabbling for power. Today, many ultra-right radicals wishing for a new golden age of Imperial Japan are urged to seek out the statue by the helpful ghost of Nobunaga. The kyonshi of Nobunaga, after five hundred years of blood and death, desires final peace. The soulless creature seeks the destruction of the statuette, which must be broken by a living hand to free his soul, but covetous human masters and the ghost of Nobunaga (actually the Aku-Shin Kage in disguise) always foil this desire.

The Aku-Shin Kage, due to a long and close affinity with the Oda in life, can take on the human form of the ghost of Nobunaga, a physical doppelganger of the kyonshi's living form, appearing age forty. In this guise, the avatar of Nyarlathotep urges on one or more deranged leaders of ultra-right nationalist groups. (A tip of the hat to the writers of the *Delta Green* sourcebook for that idea.) For more ideas about Nobunaga, see Japanese animation videos such as *Yûtenden* and *Kujakun*.

Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1536–1598)

Typifying Toyotomi's character is this famous haiku poem:
Naka nu nara Naka sêtê miseyô Ho to togisu.
The cuckoo doesn't sing? All right, I'll coax it to sing.
—Who's Who of Japan.

Picking up where Nobunaga left off, Toyotomi Hideyoshi managed to defeat the remaining major feudal warlords and unite Japan. The son of a simple farmer who left home in Owari at fourteen to find his fortunes as a military man, Hideyoshi's charisma and resourcefulness led to his quick rise to power. Even today, he is remembered as an open-minded people's hero who loved flash and ceremony. One of his lasting legacies today is the impregnable Osaka Castle, built in little over two years by 60,000 workers. Hideyoshi's healthy and generous attitude helped him quickly climb in Oda Nobunaga's ranks under the tutelage of Oda himself. When another of Oda's retainers, Akechi Mitsuhidé, killed Nobunaga, Hideyoshi was in the Chûgoku district warring with the Môri clan. When the news reached Toyotomi, he declared a truce with the Môri clan, marched back to Kyôto with all his retainers in a mere ten days, and took vengeance on Mitsuhidé.

Hideyoshi's tendency to quick action enabled him to win decisive battles and succeed to power over other feudal lords when Nobunaga perished. In his later years, Hideyoshi planned to become the ruler of East Asia by conquering Korea, China, and India. To this end, he made a bamboo fan with a map of Asia and a guide to the Chinese language on the back. Toyotomi would often carry this fan and practice Chinese in spare moments. In 1587 and 1597 he launched two assaults on the Korean peninsula with more than 150,000 soldiers but failed on both occasions. These failures quickly eroded Hideyoshi's power base. An advocate of the way of tea, Sadô, he encouraged its practice nation-wide. It was Hideyoshi who instituted the *Katana-Gari*, which strictly prohibited any person other than a samurai from owning a weapon. The intent was to prevent the commoner riots of the Sengoku Period, but it was later adapted by Ieyasu Tokugawa, who used it to keep 260 years of peace. The modern antecedent of this edict is the Sword and Gun Law (see pages 84–85).

Hideyoshi too served the ends of the Aku-Shin Kage but had his own more sane agenda. He did not see complete and total unification of Japan in his lifetime. He was able to use the strife Nobunaga and the Aku-Shin Kage had started to take the reins of power. In his later years, he understood the insanity of Oda and the danger that war presented, and so took measures to civilize the country. Though strong willed, he was never completely free of the bloodlust the Aku-Shin Kage had instilled in him while under Nobunaga. Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea and his desire to rule Asia were spurred by the spirit of Nobunaga and the Dark Warlord. They constantly had the aging Hideyoshi's ear, and he began to romanticize old battles. After his

death, Toyotomi's entire family perished in the siege of Osaka Castle when Tokugawa made his grab for power. His son's family still haunts the castle as a group of yûrei. Hideyoshi, however, escaped the clutches of any curse and went on to a greater reward.

Tokugawa Era (1600-1868)

Bashô and Issa (1644–1694)/(1763–1827)

While they never met, these poets of the Edo Period both made haiku the literary treasure it is today. Their mastery at condensing vivid imagery into the 5-7-5 syllable lines of haiku seems impossible to surpass even today. Some say that their ability to capture the vibrancy of life was almost preternatural.

In their efforts to master their craft, they may have called on aid from mythic beings like tengu or kitsune. Even more so, they may have devised the use of Cthulhu Mythos spells to tap secrets of the cosmos in order to effectively portray the world in their haiku.

Ichikawa Danjiro (1660–1704)

A famous kabuki actor in the seventeenth century Edo Period, this stage name was adopted by the head of the Ichikawa house of actors which has produced many superb Kabuki actors over many generations. Today, the actor with the name Ichikawa Danjiro is the thirteenth. The first actor with this name wooed audiences by originating the unique red and black face makeup for heroes and purple for villians now used in all Kabuki plays. In addition, he played off his extreme masculine traits with exaggerated movements on stage that became the acting style called *aru-gata*. Many fans who were actual samurai sought to emulate him in their daily lives. At the age of 45, a jealous kabuki actor stabbed Danjiro to death in his dressing room.

Vanity and superior stage presence always paramount, Danjiro could have easily been seduced by some dark promise of Nyarlathotep or found some artifact to enhance his performances. Mystically held in his thrall, the audience left performances dazed. Perhaps the artifact was meant for a more evil purpose than wooing crowds, and he was killed for it.

John Manjiro (1827–1898)

Lost at sea and picked up by an American ship at the turn of the century, Manjiro traveled to America and became one of the first Japanese to return from overseas. Named John by his sea captain, he had many adventures in the U.S. and eventually returned to Japan when he earned enough money. The information he brought back about the modern West was highly valued by the floundering shogûnate. He was made a samurai.

Manjiro saw many strange things. The tales he brought to his adopted country and then back to Japan woke the interest of unsavory parties on both sides of the Pacific. Sensing easy pickings, these cults and darker things took action to harvest this fertile ground.

Ieyasu Tokugawa (1542–1616)

A famous haiku poem best captures Tokugawa's nature:
Naka no nara Naku made matou Ho to togisu.
The cuckoo doesn't sing? All right, I'll wait till it sings.
—Who's Who of Japan.

In the Sengoku warring states era, Tokugawa Ieyasu was the ultimate beneficiary and victor of the several powerful warlords attempting to bring Japan under one military ruler. Firstborn to a lesser daimyô in Aichi Prefecture's old Mikawa region, he used his political acumen and keen military strategy as the basis for a regime of peace. Under the aegis of the Tokugawa Period, it would endure 260 years until the modern Meiji Era. Ieyasu served as a retainer for both Nobunaga Oda and Hideyoshi Toyotomi. He learned from their mistakes to eventually claim the reins of rulership. One essential trait credited to Ieyasu was his patience. His strength of character led to his final triumph as shôgun.

Famous events in his life include the bloody Battle of Sekigahara (now Gifu Prefecture) which turned into the largest civil war in the history of Japan. Ieyasu's superior tactics and 100,000 men won the day against Daimyô Toyotomi's army of 80,000. At the conclusion of the conflict, Ieyasu took power as the Tokugawa Shôgun, fulfilling a lifelong ambition. After Sekigahara all was not settled, as Toyotomi's son, Hideyori, became a bitter enemy. Held up in the impenetrable Osaka Castle, Hideyori was able to resist any siege Tokugawa could conceive. The shôgun declared peace provided that the castle moats were plugged. Months later, Osaka Castle with its filled and ineffectual moats was no match for the overwhelming attack staged by Ieyasu. Toyotomi Hideyori and his family committed seppuku rather than suffer the dishonor of being taken hostage. At age seventy, Ieyasu inscribed the *Namu Amida Butsu* chant on a 10-meter scroll in regret for all the lives cut short by his hands.

Ieyasu's tomb at Tôshôgû Shrine faces west and to this day his kami acts as a guardian of the Tokugawa family. Covertly, he never directly served the Aku-Shin Kage, but the blood left in Tokugawa's wake served the Dark Warlord's purposes. The scroll of the Namu Amida Butsu crafted by this man, who successfully resisted Nyarlathotep's lure his whole life and unified Japan, is one of the few ways to physically banish the Dark Warlord from the earth. If read in its entirety in the Aku-Shin Kage's presence, the avatar is physically banished from the earth for 108 years.

Meiji Era (1868-1912)

Bott-Chan
by Natsume Soseki (1867–1916)

A math teacher fresh from university in Tokyo goes to rural Japan in Shikoku to teach at a high school. There he encounters a whole assortment of strange characters as his co-workers, whom he nicknames after the animals they most resemble.

In finding the people in this small town strange to his city sensibilities, maybe Bott-chan isn't far off the mark. At the turn of the century, the possibility of a colony of deep ones or kappa controlling a small rural town on the Seto Inland Sea is entirely plausible.

Wagahai Wa Neko De Aru (I Am a Cat)
by Natsume Soseki (1867-1916)

Set in 1920s Japan: this story tells of the faults and follies of everyday life in a small town. Mundane, you say, until you discover the story is written from the perspective of the family cat.

Perhaps this cat really is as intelligent as a human and is a well respected cat in the Dreamlands.

Appendices

APPENDIX ONE:

CULTURAL LEXICON

Wherein essential terms are defined for the aid of understanding.

Understand your enemy or you will lose the battle before it is begun: you must go within the spirit and life of your opponent, embrace it before you ever deign to take it. Your enemy is not the man standing opposite you, it is yourself.

—Musashi Miyamoto, *The Sixth Ring*.

Welcome, brave traveler! Welcome to exotic Japan. Begin your research into this strange land by gaining command of the field's terminology; study it well, and in no time you'll be a true Japanologist.

Regions and Cities

Hokkaido (ho-k-eye-dough): Northernmost island of Japan and wholly one prefecture. The capital of Sapporo is famous for milk, beer brewing, and an annual ice sculpture festival in February. Also home to the native Ainu peoples, the prefecture is sparsely populated and chilly for most of the year. To its north are the Russian-controlled Kuril Islands.

Honshu (ho-on-shoe): The largest and main island of the four-island archipelago of Japan. Both the Kansai and Kanto regions are located on Honshu.

Kansai (con-sigh): The Kansai basin is a region in the southern half of the main island of Honshu that contains the metropolises of Kobe, Osaka, Nara, and Kyoto and their 22 million inhabitants. Kansai people are seen as a little more down to earth, friendly, and have a colorful, earthy dialect called *Kinki-Ben*. They often relish using it around snobbish Kanto folk.

Kanto (can-toe): The Kanto plain, where Tokyo city soars. Kanto people often see themselves as different from the rest of Japan. They feel more sophisticated and worldly than their main competitors, those of the Kansai plain. These cosmopolitan folk exude a cold, aloof air. Kanto Japanese speak what is designated as standard Japanese: the Tokyo dialect.

Kyoto (key-yo-toe): The ancient capital of Japan. Saved from bombing in the war, it preserves over a thousand years of history in the form of temples and shrines. Kyoto is a favorite tourist destination. This city exemplifies the old soul of Japan.

Okinawa (oh-key-nah-wah): The hub of a longish island chain, this tiny prefecture is located about 600 miles southwest of the mainland of Japan. Just sixty miles from Taiwan, this former independent Pacific kingdom is cloaked in dense tropical jungles and is a popular tourist destination. This was the scene of some of the most horrific fighting of WWII. The U.S. military has large bases here. They serve as a hub for the Pacific region and are a major bone of contention with local residents.

Osaka (oh-saw-ka): Historically, one of Japan's major industrial ports. The city was rebuilt after the war and is a temple to commerce and an economic powerhouse. Cosmetically, the city is not much to look at above street-level: the skyline is clogged with layers of congested highway overpasses and elevated trains.

Tokyo (toe-key-oh): The jewel of Asia. Tokyo is one of the world's largest cities and the capital of Japan for over two hundred years. Called Edo until the turn of the century, Tokyo has always been the trendsetter for the rest of the country; the energy and pulse of the city are palpable to visitors.

The Urban Scene

Just like any other society, there are numerous sub-cultures, each with their own terminology to keep outsiders on the fringe. If a sub-culture becomes popular or big enough, its slang begins to infiltrate the common tongue. Many of the monikers below are sub-culture terms that have made it into common parlance. The working class sometimes has been given unflattering titles by other sectors of society.

OL (oh-ell): Office lady; office ornament. These women are dressed in identical uniforms and perform menial duties like serving tea and making copies. They are expected to quit and marry a salaryman in the office within a few years. Off duty, they are often seen dressed in frumpy dresses and long hair.

ojôsama (oh-joe-sam-ma): Preppy women and spoiled rich girls who, after finishing college, are expected to marry salarymen. They prefer to dress in conservative outfits.

ronin (row-kne-en): A young person trying to get into university. Often they can't get into the school of their choice after their first try at the exams and must wait anywhere from one to three years for the

annual tests. To keep their families from shame, they pick up several part time jobs and haunt the cities where they wish to retake the tests, cramming for the tests between jobs.

salaryman: A white-collar worker; a cog in the massive grinding gears of Japan Inc.'s corporations. Taken fresh from high school, the company is his life. Most favor blue or gray suits.

The Japanese have also coined names for guests to their country.

Amekо (ah-may-co): American, yank. Related: Hakujin (Caucasian), Kokujin (African descent), kimpatsu (blonde).

gaijin (guy-gee-n): Foreigner, literally, "outside person." The older definition was "hairy big nosed barbarian." Anyone who is not native Japanese. Sometimes used as an epithet. Much more polite is *gaikoku-jin*, person from another land. Young people sometimes use *jingai*, a reversal of gaijin so that foreigners don't pick up on it. Related: *gaijin-sama*, *ijin*.

hafu (hah-foo): Half breed. Someone partially of Japanese descent. Meant to be derogatory. Related: *ainoko* (love child). Some are moving for the use of the term *daburu*, or double, as one more positive.

nisei (knee-say): A person of Japanese descent but born in another country as a second-generation immigrant. Related: *sansei*, of third generation descent.

Discrimination isn't only applied to foreigners, but some Japanese are classified as birth.

Ainu (eye-new): The original inhabitants of the Japanese islands, like the Aborigines of Australia, or Native Americans. Forced to live in villages in frigid and remote Hokkaido.

burakumin (boo-rah-koo-meun): A taboo word; Japanese outcasts, people whose families were traditionally engaged in lower caste trades such as leather working, hunting, and gravedigging, all seen as defilements of the spirit. A related word is *eta*. Both words make the most liberal of Japanese squirm with embarrassment.

Edokko (eh-doe-ko): Japanese people from the Tokyo region: the Kanto Plain.

Kansai-jin (khan-sigh-jean): Japanese people from Western Japan, the Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto area.

Other Japanese become social misfits or stand out from the crowd by choice.

gaisen (guy-sen): Girls who only date gaijin.

ike-ike onna (e-key-e-key-oh-nah): Disco queen. Young women who fancy day-glo minis, dyed brown hair, deep suntans, and expensive handbags. They often work in hostess bars or soap lands (brothels) and are also referred to in a derogatory way by their older moniker of *mizu-shobai*, female of the water trade, or prostitute.

ko garu (co-gah-ruu): High school girls of upwardly mobile middle-class families who dress like ike-ike onna. Nowadays, small persons-ages are also emulating their older sisters in more ways than one. Some *ko garu* are involved in *enjo-kosai*, or compensated dating, soft prostitution and a growing problem in the last few years.

obatarian (oh-bah-tah-rhee-an): Old crone; women often seen bent over ninety degrees pushing rickety old baby carts. A construction of the words *obasan*, old woman, and the Japanese rendition of the word *battalion*. They are humorously seen as an army of old ladies with a penchant for running over anyone in the way with their rusty carts.

yankees (yang-keys): Young Japanese who prefer hair dyed brown or blonde, flashy colors, extra baggy pants called *nikka-bakka*, and who tend to end up in the construction industry due to their lack of career planning. Related: *chapatsu* (brown hair), *ki-negami* (yellow-haired teenage rebels).

Then there are underworld elements.

bosozoku (bow-so-zoe-kew): Motorcycle tribes. Groups of youths that form motorcycle gangs complete with banners of tribal colors and flashy bikes. They spend their evenings revving their motorcycle engines with modified mufflers for the loudest effect until the police come. They never seem to catch them. More radical bosozoku graduates become Yakuza.

chimpira (chee-em-pee-rah): Young street punks. Yankees who have taken rebellion further and try to attract the attention of the Yakuza. They are young gang members in training, often doing menial jobs and footwork for the local *gumi*, or Mafia clan.

Yakuza (yah-cue-zah): Japanese criminal syndicates. In the heyday of the bubble-economy of the 1980s, Yakuza wore punch perms, sunglasses, and traditional sandals, and were heavily into real estate. Nowadays they are much subtler, noticed only for their expensive German cars and blacked-out windows. AKA: *Yat-chan* (affectionate). Related: *mon-mon*, *irezumo* (tattoos).

Philosophy

Here is a selection of basic beliefs that most Japanese hold to in everyday life. Confucianism and Zen are two strong influences on the cultural ethical model. Most of these concepts are deeply ingrained in the Japanese way of life. Understanding them goes a long way to helping a foreigner understand the motives behind Japanese behavior.

aku (ah-coo): Evil. Aku is evil in the ethical sense. Before the importation of Confucianism and Buddhism around 600 C.E., Japanese understanding of evil was quite different. Called *ashi*, evil was more an impure state and polar opposite of *yoshi* (good). Evil deities were beings feared, worshiped, and appeased due to their potential for spiritual defilement. It is interesting to note that while evil is seen as bad, great evil is also held in awe for its raw power.

Bushidô (boo-she-doe): Literally, way of the warrior. A term coined in the Edo Period (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries C.E.) of Japan describing the ethical code of the samurai class. Involving martial spirit, the core ethics of Bushidô are absolute loyalty to your lord (chû), strong personal honor (meiyo), devotion to duty (akirame), and the courage (ki) to sacrifice your life in battle or ritual suicide (seppuku). Now mostly adhered to by the corporate culture and salarymen.

chû (chew): Loyalty. Derived from the Confucian ethic, this concept of loyalty later became enmeshed in the needs of feudal society. Loyalty came to entail the relationship between warrior and lord, service to one's feudal lord even at risk of death, in exchange for the rewards service brought. Large-scale social structures were actually pyramidal with each layer an interpersonal loyalty. Today, this relationship is most often seen in the corporate world.

HARA-KIRI/SEPPUKU

hara-kiri (har-rah-key-rhee): Cut-stomach, Japanese ritual suicide by self-disembowelment. *Seppuku* is a much more

polite term. *Hara*, the gut, is chosen as the focus of the ritual as this is traditionally where the soul is believed to reside. This act is still done by traditionally minded people if the shame of an incident is great enough.

kô (co): Filial piety. Core precept of the Confucian model of society and common to all Asian societies. Basically, it is the feeling that children should respect and obey their elders and provide for them in their twilight years and that the elders in turn should faithfully run the household to the best of their ability. This system leads to multi-generational families all under one roof, as distinguished from the Western nuclear family.

makoto (mah-co-toe): Sincerity, true conduct. In Confucian philosophy, makoto is an essential metaphysical virtue of people. In relationships, sincerity of mind and heart between individuals should be the ideal.

meiyo (may-yoh): Honor. A concept that has ruled over many aspects of Japanese society since its beginnings. Rather than the guilt of the Judeo-Christian West, honor and shame serve as a regulating mechanism in Japan. A great deal is made of a person's reputation, *kao* or "face." To lose face is to lose honor and thus to shame not only yourself but also all of your family and ancestors. The weight of everyone before you can truly be a heavy influence on your actions in Japanese society.

michi (mi-chee): The path, the way. A road or standard that people must follow. The core principle of a belief system, art, skill, or philosophy. The term michi is also used to describe a set of principles and skills that encompasses an art. This latter use is prevalent in many traditional arts. Examples include Bushidô (the way of the warrior), Kendô (the way of the sword), Shôdô (the way of the ink brush), and Sadô (the way of tea).

morality: Different from the Western morality, Japanese morality is based upon Confucian thought. Confucius said, "In the morning hear the way, in the evening die without regrets." Morality is more than ethics for daily living and functioning in society; it is man's attitude toward the infinite, other human beings, and his surroundings. Currently this moral model is in a state of crisis as the problems of decadence in Western societies arise in Japan.

on (ohn): Favor, indebtedness. In Japan, this value is a major force that turns the wheels of society. On is the social debt a person incurs when he or she receives a favor or gift from another. On serves to keep everyone bound in a web of reciprocity. A person to whom you owe great debt such as a teacher or doctor is referred to as an *on-jin*. *Giri*, the other side of the coin, is the requirement to return the favor. One of the most insulting things a Japanese can do is fail to repay on; such people are referred to as *shi-razu*.

tsumi (sue-me): Sin, crime. Related in ancient times with the Shinto idea of ritual impurity, tsumi are considered to be things that debase or block the flow of the life force. Originally, it referred to pollution of pure places, calamities, and physical disabilities.

wakon yôsai (wah-con yoh-sigh): Japanese spirit, Western knowledge. It is the idea of taking Western learning and knowledge and weaving it with native Japanese tradition. Since the Meiji Period of modernization, this concept has been propelling Japan into the modern age. The so-called "Japan Inc." of the 1980s was the ultimate fruit of this concept. Some feel that the main problem of the present day is that the Western part of the equation has come to outweigh the preservation of the native culture.

Yamato Damashi (yah-mah-toe dah-mah-she): Japanese Spirit. Spiritual qualities that make the Japanese unique as a race. Commonly, it refers to a range of qualities—courage, sincerity, devotion, fortitude. Taken to its extreme during WWII, it was combined with the militant concept of *sonnô jôi*, "revere the emperor, expel the barbarians," and used to promote unfailing loyalty to emperor and nation. Fallen from mainstream speech, Yamato Damashi is now openly voiced only by extreme ultra-nationalists. Though the phrase is rarely used, most Japanese citizens still hold close to their hearts a more innocent ideal of Japanese uniqueness.

Social Theory

Many elements make Japanese society unique in the modern age. Some customs allow for highly successful ventures in certain areas of today's world while others leave an outsider scratching his head in puzzlement.

Though on the surface Japan seems a high tech industrial country, many feudal societal concepts lurk under its shiny veneer. Grasping the way Japanese society works goes a long way toward making it work smoothly for the foreigner.

By its very structure, Japanese society is a group-oriented, consensus-based hierarchical culture. In most settings, group identity is more important than any individual. In initial greetings, people try to establish their rank in the pecking order based on company affiliation, age, and income. After determining this, they treat each other based on this perceived ranking.

akirame (ah-key-rah-me): Resignation. This concept is a Confucian one later adopted as part of the warrior ethic of Bushidô. Until just after the war, Japanese tradition long encouraged toughing it out and enduring hardships with patience, self-control, and perseverance. This resignation also reflects the Buddhist acceptance of the transient nature of all things, including pain and hardship.

amae (ah-my-eh): Dependency upon others for love, patience and tolerance. The two basic reasons for amae are a need to be loved and a feeling of helplessness. As the parent-child relationships have parallels in many other traditional relationships, amae permeates the society. Japanese culture seems to encourage this basking in another's love and dependency. This explains many facets of Japanese culture: the strong desire to blend into the group; diffuse concepts of a distinct "self" and "other"; differing ideas about what constitutes privacy and individualism; dislike of clearly defined local solutions; and nonverbal communication.

batsu (bah-sue): A clique or faction based on common factors. These factors can be company, region, family, or common associate. A batsu is hierarchical and most often paternal in authority. Members have giri to help each other and owe on to their superiors. A leader uses paternalistic or fatherly controls and expects loyalty from his underlings. This relationship is seen in oyabun-kobun and sempai-kôhai relationships. There are many strong institutional batsu in society today: gakubatsu (university clique), keibatsu (marriage alliance), habatsu (union or political clique). Before WWII, there also existed zaibatsu (financial/industrial conglomerates) and hambatsu (military domain cliques).

bun (boo-n): Status, role. Since the Edo Period Japanese people have had clearly defined roles in the hierarchy of society. During that period, the shôgun set up distinct social classes with no mobility between them. This has resulted even today in Japanese being highly conscious of occupational status and family reputation. Today family history, educational achievements, occupational status, seniority, and gender determine status.

enryo (en-rhee-yoh): Reserve, restraint. The most important guiding ethic in personal behavior, it is the refusal of gifts, compliments, or favors at the outset in order to not put too many demands on others

with your own needs. Too little enryo and a person is seen as pushy, too much and a person is seen as remote, so it needs to be balanced with amae.

gambaru (gah-em-bah-rew): "Do your best!" "Persist!" "Hang on!" Gambaru is a word used to cheer on hard work or enthusiasm. Most often, it is used to encourage peers to cooperate in group-oriented projects. In English it might be seen as a rough equivalent for "Good luck!" or "Go for it!"

giri and ninjô (gee-rhee and kneen-joe): Moral obligation and natural inclination. Giri is reciprocity in the form of social obligation—help those who have helped you, and return favors. This is the flip side of on and a person who honors giri is considered morally worthy. Ninjô, human feelings, mostly does not conflict with giri, but when it does, conflict within a person arises and is the subject of many love-suicide dramas in Japanese literature.

groups: From childhood, Japanese are taught the importance of group orientation over individuality. Groups in Japan can be imagined as nested spheres, with the innermost being immediate family, the next sphere being school or neighbors, then groups at work, and strangers as the outermost sphere. It should be noted that this "group-ism" is used for differentiation in what is a remarkably homogenous society. This group-ness can be expanded to a national scale with everyone of Japanese blood considered part of the group, leaving the foreigner, who is the ultimate outsider. Ranking is clearly defined within groups: it is here that on and giri are practiced. Heart-felt, personable relationships are only maintained between group members, closing off outsiders. Groups are further strengthened by recognizing competing groups and the rivalries developing from this.

haji (hah-gee): Shame. Shame in Japan is a fear of sullying one's own self-image, though fear of ostracism and criticism by others also plays a social role. Traditionally, Japan is a shame culture, which is shades different from Western, guilt based cultures. In a general sense, shame is only felt when "caught in the act"—external sanctions—and is not dependent upon a personal conscience as in guilt-based cultures.

hara: Abdomen, womb, stomach. Many words used for body parts have come to carry complex social meanings in the Japanese language. Traditionally, the stomach has been thought to be the focus of emotion, thoughts, and intentions as evidenced by the practice of hara-kiri.

ie (e-eh): Household. Family. The basic communal unit of traditional Japan; the family core and its orbiting relatives and acquaintances. Once a household is formed, it is expected to last throughout the ages even though members may die or marry into other families. Ie considers the group as a whole, venerating those who came before and embracing children yet to be born, all as a part of the greater whole. Modern ie groups include traditional arts and crafts, and farmers. Ie schools of art pass on what amount to family secrets and values, often going back generations. A pop-culture example of this are the two well known ninja schools/clans of practice; the Koga Clan and the Iga Clan.

ikigai (e-key-guy): What makes life worth living. A purpose in life. What gives life meaning. After WWII, Japan's old values and beliefs were confused. The term ikigai has been used to redefine just what is important to people. The common response today to ikigai is "happy home and children" for women, and "work" for men.

kan (con): A type of intuition, knack, or sixth sense. Kan is vital to successfully master difficult skills such as martial arts. Kan is defined in two differing senses: the Western idea of intuition, and that of having a knack or gift for a skill consciously worked at.

kao (cow): Face. In personal relationships, kao is a vital concept, one related to tatemae as it refers to an individual's social self or face in public. To keep a good face in public has been an important principle among Japanese for a long time. (Numerous phrases in Japanese refer to the status of one's face, but don't include the Mythos occurrence of having it ripped off!)

ki (key): Mind, spirit, heart. Well known in the West via martial arts, ki is used in thirty plus expressions to describe one's mindset. (A person's ki state is seen as separate from a judgement of the person.) There are four categories:

1) Consciousness or sanity—when unconscious or insane, your ki is out of synch.
2) Interest or intention—when enthused, your ki advances.
3) Mood or emotions—when depressed, your ki sinks.
4) Heart or mind—if your ki is long you are a patient person.

mura-hachi-bu (moo-rah-hah-chee-boo): Ostracism. Since ancient times, an extreme method of social control was the threat of total exclusion from participating in social, economic and community activities. For the group oriented Japanese, such a pronouncement was harsh; it was usually reserved for extremely shameful crimes or betraying group secrets to outsiders. Even today, milder forms of mura-hachibu are practiced among group members who fall out of favor.

mushi (moo-she): Worm, bug. Since ancient times the Japanese have been hesitant to attribute impulsive actions to an individual but rather blame an outside influence. So the idea arose that a worm or bug had dug its way into a person and affected that person's behavior. Many Japanese phrases convey this concept: "Possessed by the worm of depression," "worm of the belly is not calm" for anger, "worm of fickleness" for a man having an affair, and so forth.

nemawashi (knee-mah-wah-she): Prior consultation. Due to a desire for the avoidance of conflict and the natural group orientation of Japanese, nemawashi is used to gain a consensus in decision making. Nemawashi is the process of manipulating behind the scenes to gain acceptance of objectives in advance of an official discussion or vote taking. In general, decision-making in Japan is slow and tedious but as a result of nemawashi, such decisions are implemented smoothly.

nonverbal communication: Due to the high homogeneity of the Japanese people, etiquette and gestures learned from childhood make up a large portion of interpersonal communication. These nonverbal cues serve as a springboard for verbal communication. In Japanese society, as much is communicated in the pauses between talking as the talking itself.

oyabun/kobun (oh-yah-boon/co-boon): Parent role-child role. Two parties, for economic and social reasons, adopt this relationship for mutual support. Oyabun-kobun has been the basis of many small cooperative organizations. The oyabun is assigned his role often because of superior wealth, status, or power and his duty is to guide the kobun. The kobun in turn is expected to accept this authority and offer his complete loyalty. A prime example of oyabun-kobun relationships can be seen in gangster groups. Any powerful individual may be referred to as an oyabun in jest.

rei (ray): Propriety, decorum. From Confucianism, it describes the proper conduct in rituals, ceremonies, etiquette, laws and regulations of the state. It is the man-made rules that guide society, or a sense of tradition in the form of proper etiquette and manners.

sempai/kôhai (seh-em-pie/co-high): Senior-junior. Found in almost every facet of Japanese relations, this casual relationship exists in institutions, schools, businesses, and so forth. The senior-junior status of the relationship is determined by seniority in the organization. The older member offers friendship, aid, and wisdom to the younger

member who responds with respect, loyalty and gratitude. Such relationships oft times develop into deep, lifelong ones. A similar phenomenon in the West might be seen in secret societies or academics.

tatemae/honne (tah-tay-mah-eh/ho-knee): Outside appearance/true intentions. Used to describe public behavior as opposed to private behavior. From a young age, Japanese are taught to strongly honor social norms and sacrifice personal aims to avoid disharmony within the group. Thus Japanese develop two psychological masks: a public one and a private one. Because of this, at certain times it becomes difficult to determine a person's true intentions.

vertical society: Phrase coined by anthropologist Chie Nakane. The concept is that any group of Japanese shares a common frame of reference and that the constitution of such a group is based upon vertically oriented relationships, in contrast to horizontal, equal relationships in the West. Such vertical relationships are superior-subordinate, senior-junior, parent-child, and husband-wife. This vertical structure is also found in organizations such as parent company-junior company. It serves to link a group to other larger groups, creating a vast chain of ranking hierarchy. One's ranking is always in the back of a Japanese person's mind and this ranking, based on seniority rather than ability, functions to maintain the social order of the society.

Religious Theory

Where the outsider begins to see that he or she is a truly a stranger in a strange land is in exploring Japan's realm of religious thought. Though the attention of the Japanese is on the daily routine of making Japan Inc. work using Western methods, the spirit of the Japanese people is elsewhere. With the native religion of Shinto, every Japanese inherits religious traditions dating back into pre-history. The newer religion, imported in 7 C.E. from China and Korea, is Buddhism, which has had a great influence on all aspects of Japanese life from that point forward.

Surprisingly, the two religions peacefully co-exist. Each serves different functions in the life cycle, Shinto promotes veneration for life and Buddhism deals with death and the salvation of the spirit. Christianity was introduced in the seventeenth century. Because of its subsequent persecution, it has had a lesser influence, and less than one percent of the people are Christian. So, it's important not to attach Christian connotations to similar-sounding concepts like heaven or hell. The built-in baggage they tend to carry in the Western mind can be deceptive. The basic religious concepts below suggest just how drastically different Japanese spiritual thought is from the West's Judeo-Christian norm.

Buddhism: Bukkyō. A seventh century importation from Korea, Buddhism has done more to shape the Japanese mind than anything before it. The thrust of Buddhism is that all sentient beings suffer from constant rebirth on the endless wheel of samsara, as well as from the karma that this process produces. Like a doctor, Buddhist doctrine analyzes the causes for this process and works to eliminate them, thus allowing beings to remove themselves from the suffering that samsara causes. Buddhism doesn't ask where or when this universe began, it only seeks to help those wishing to get off the roller coaster ride. An old parable goes:

> You are hit in the arm by an arrow and the pain is quite acute. When the doctor runs up to help, you don't want him to barrage you with questions such as 'What was the angle of entry?' 'Did you see where it came from?' but you want the doctor to remove the painful intrusion immediately! This same philosophy holds for Buddhism: don't ask the whys and wherefores, just remove the suffering."

inga/karma (en-gah): Cause and effect. Buddhist doctrine important in understanding this reality. Inga is, in essence, the chain of cause and effect and the karma it produces. Inga is the idea of karmic retribution and the good or bad effects one's actions produce, whether in this life or the next. For example, if someone callously kills another person, he or she can expect bad karma in return for that deed. Buddhism strives to remove all inga, or karmic debt, which is the cause of all suffering, and thus deliver a being to Nirvana.

Jigoku (gee-go-cew): Hell. The hells, a separate place from the Realm of the Dead (Yomi), were introduced by Buddhism in the seventh century and are a place of punishment for the damned. Originally of Hindu origin, the hells carry distinct punishments for certain transgressions. There are eight hot hells and eight cold hells. The ruler of all the hells as well as Yomi is the judge of the damned, Emma-O, who reviews their deeds and consigns them to the appropriate hell. Fiends known as oni take on the role of tormentors in the hells.

The hells differ from the Western conception in that the damned, once they have worked off the bad karma that put them in hell, return to the cycle of reincarnation and may be reborn in the human realm to start afresh. A trip to hell is not eternal. The catch is that the stay can be a long one—measured in epochs before freedom.

kami (kah-me): Deity, divine. In the native Shinto religion, kami are superior indefinable powers composed of the dual aspects of creation and destruction which reside in natural things, animals, and certain special humans like the emperor. People worship some kami out of dread, and others in homage. Veneration of kami is the core of Shinto ritual worship.

There are tiers of such divine beings: heavenly kami dwell in the High Celestial Plain, Taka-Maga-Hara, and are paid homage to at shrines. Earthly spirits manifest in natural objects such as trees, streams, and mountains. If treated with respect and venerated properly, kami are benevolent for the most part. Each kami possesses a special force or will called tama and bears two sides: arami-tama, a rough evil aspect, and nigimi-tama, a soft good aspect.

kegare (kay-gah-ray): Defilement, impurity. From the ancient origins of the Japanese culture, purity and impurity, cleanliness and uncleanness have always been closely associated with sin and crime. Also, it was commonly thought that such a tainted individual could pass on his sin by direct contact with another. Kegare defines a number of such impurities: unsanitary conditions; exposure to human blood, dead and dying things; natural disasters; and any disruption to the natural order of society.

kû (kew): Emptiness. An important Buddhist concept, it is the awareness that all things are dependent upon causes and effects for their existence; elimination of these conditions allows one to see the true emptiness of reality. In normal perception, by creating conceptualizations and verbal descriptions of reality we treat it as filled with fixed entities and permanent structures that it does not possess. By seeing the attachments humans form, we can see the root cause of passions, suffering, and illusionary perceptions of this reality and eliminate them to attain enlightenment.

misogi (mi-sew-gee): A Shinto ritual of purification. It is the cleansing of the body with water to remove worldly defilements of body and spirit. Shinto religion traditionally stresses the importance of purity and cleanliness, so the ritual of misogi is vital before conducting or participating in any ceremony. At shrines, misogi can be seen in the form of people rinsing hands and mouth at basins before entering.

nature and religion: In the general views of Asian cultures, mankind and nature are not distinctly separate. Since nature itself is held in veneration, much Asian soul-searching involves determining man's correct place within the scheme of nature.

Nehan/Nirvana (knee-han): Extinction of the flame. A Buddhist concept, it's the level of enlightenment, satori, where one achieves the wisdom to extinguish the flame of craving and desire. Accomplished in life or after death, it is the cessation of samsara, the endless cycle of reincarnation; and the pain and suffering samsara brings. All Buddhas arrive at this state. To exist in Nirvana is to exist beyond life and death, being and non-being. It is to transcend all absolutes. There are beings called Bodhisattva or Bosatsu in Japanese, who reach satori but choose to remain in samsara to aid others on the path.

nembutsu (neh-em-boo-sue): "I take my refuge in the Amida Buddha." This phrase is spoken in hope of rebirth in Amida Buddha's Western Paradise—the Pure Land. In addition, it can be used as a chant to attempt to attain sudden enlightenment or to cancel bad karma. The religious may utter the nembutsu when faced with something beyond their understanding.

onmyôdô (oh-me-yoh-dough): Yin and Yang. Originally a Taoist concept, it's the idea that all of nature exists in polar dualities: female and male aspects, fire and water, good and evil, hot and cold, positive and negative, soft and hard, and so forth. Yin and Yang permeates much of Asian culture in such subtle ways that Asians may not realize that they are using it as a means of classification. Opposing extremes of a state are not judged, nor are they grouped together, rather they are accepted for what they are, as one state that eventually will beget its opposite. "As bad as things are, they can only get better . . . can't they?"

rinne (rhee-nay): Samsara, rebirth, transmigration. Buddhism holds that all sentient beings are constantly in a cycle of transmigration and rebirth. A being's karma determines just where and as what a being is reborn. Rebirth takes place in one of the Six Realms of the universe. Listed from most the unpleasant to the most desirable, they are the Realm of the Hells; the Realm of Hungry Spirits; the Realm of Asuras; the Realm of Beasts; the Realm of Man; and the Heavenly Realm.

A being can always fall from or ascend these levels based on his actions and the karma incurred. Related to the elimination of ingi, Buddhism ultimately aims to help sentient beings escape this endless cycle of reincarnation and attain Buddhahood or reach Amida Buddha's Western Paradise. Since most Japanese believe in rinne, they are generally not afraid to die if the reason is compelling (hence harakiri), but some of the nastier Great Old Ones not only take physical life but also absorb a person's immortal soul, which makes even the bravest Japanese blanch.

satori (saw-tue-rhee): Awakening, enlightenment. Satori is a central aim of Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism holds that all people are already Buddhas, but that they must reawaken to this fact. With "sudden awakening" (enlightenment), an individual realizes his or her innate Buddha-nature. The experience is akin to a blind person determining what an elephant is by touch alone—then suddenly gaining perfect vision. Some Mythos scholars believe that sorcerers get their high power by tapping into their own Buddha-nature.

Shinto (shin-toe): The native religion of Japan. Shinto is the worship of spirits, called kami, which inhabit all aspects of nature. A form of animism, Shinto venerates nature as sacred. All of the deities, kami, come from nature but it's not for this reason alone that nature is venerated—it is for the sacred and majestic beauty of nature itself. All things, humans and kami alike, are within the sphere of nature. Even though nature may exhibit a dark side, that is just one face of the duality present in all nature.

tama (tah-mah): Spiritual substance, ectoplasm. In Shinto, tama is the metaphysical component of a being, independent of its physicality but connected to it. If sickness prevails, the amount of tama lessens; if death occurs, the tama-spirit of a being escapes. There are four types of tama in a being. An evil tama results in vengeful spirits, who must be pacified through special rites.

ten (ten): Heaven. It carries several connotations due to the influence of two religions on the Japanese mind. In Shinto, heaven is the abode of kami, the *taka-maga-hara* with the Sun Goddess Amaterasu heading the pantheon. In Buddhism, it is either a future dwelling place for the enlightened or the Western Paradise (goku-raku) of popular Pure Land Buddhism, where one goes after being saved by Amida Buddha. Tengoku, the Christian concept of heaven, also has a small following.

Yomi (yoh-me): Realm of the Dead. Originally a Shinto concept, this is where spirits of the dead go who were not remembered by a living family and thus had no one to look after. Several mythic heroes journeyed to Yomi for loved ones. A good parallel would be the Greek vision of Hades. In Buddhism, Yomi also became a place where "hungry ghosts" dwelled and is now considered a place of corruption where monstrous yôkai dwell. ☯

Cthulhu Sushi: What's eating you? by Jason Chan

APPENDIX TWO:

TIMELINES

Important and strange Japanese events from 1800 onward.

Disasters, Strife, the Noteworthy

Time goes in two directions. Only commoners look backward or forward. The Book of Truth *is the entire history of our nation from its exalted dawn lit by Muvian viverer priests to its end in the darkest night of the Great Mappo. All is here for those of the Blood. Use care with this knowledge for Goddess Amaterasu still looks on us the caretaker of our people.*

—The Book of Truth (The Shinwa Taizen, original Muvian copy).

The Japanese have always marked the years based on the name of the reigning emperor. Only since WWII has the Julian calendar come into use. Today, all official documents mark the date with the year of the emperor's reign, the month, and then the day. For example, January 31st 2002 is Heisei 15.01.31.

The Meiji Era spanned from 1868 to 1911, ending in Meiji 44. The Taisho Era lasted from 1912 to 1925, the Showa Era 1926 to 1989, ending in Showa 63. Currently, 2002 is Heisei 15. The glorious year 2000 was Heisei 13.

The Meiji & Taisho Eras

To Japanese minds, these eras mark Japan's entry into the modern world as an industrial nation. All sectors were keen to learn how to emulate the successes of the West and bring parity between Japan and First World nations. Foreign scholars and experts were imported in earnest to effect quick and sweeping changes in Japanese society. But it had its price: along with industrialism and Western ways came a casting aside of old values and traditions, which left much of the nation morally adrift. There also came a desire for the colonialism Japan saw its Western counterparts practicing, sparking several regional conflicts in Asia.

1890—Imperial Prescript on Education handed to all schools, oath now said to emperor at beginning of classes. Lafcadio Hearn arrives in Tokyo. *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) will establish his reputation as a writer on Japan.

1891—Ohtsu Incident: assassination attempt on Russian Crown Prince Nicholas Alexandrovich on a pleasure cruise in Japan. Earthquake in Gifu and Aichi Prefectures kills 7,273 people.

1893—Tonghak Rebellion: a peasant uprising breaks out in Korea. Both China and Japan intervene, starting the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895.

1894—Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 begins.

1895—Assassination of Queen Min of Korea by Japanese troops. Tripartite Intervention: Japan is forced by Russia, France, and Germany to relinquish territory ceded to it by China; Taiwan becomes a Japanese colony as part of China's surrender at the end of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895; Treaty of Shimonoseki ends hostilities between China and Japan.

1897—*The Japan Times*, the first English language newspaper owned and edited by Japanese, begins publication.

1899—First Japanese-made motion pictures shown in Kabuki-za Theater in Tokyo. Nitobe Inazoh publishes *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* in Philadelphia.

1900–Boxer Rebellion in China. Russia occupies Manchuria threatening Japanese colonial ambitions on the continent. Public Order of Police Law enacted.

1901—Ultra-nationalist Amur River Society founded to promote Japanese expansion in Asia.

1904—Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) begins. George Bailey Sansom comes to Japan; he later publishes *Japan: A Short Cultural History* in 1931 and the three volume *History of Japan* in 1958–63.

1905—Treaty of Portsmouth marks the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05). Korean-Japanese Convention of 1905: Korea becomes a Japanese protectorate. Natsume Soseki begins serialization in a magazine of *Wagahai Wa Neko De Aru (I Am a Cat)*, a satirical novel whose narrator is a cat.

1906—Japanese government protests the segregation of Japanese children in San Francisco schools. Shimazaki Tohson publishes naturalist novel *Hakai (The Broken Commandment)* which deals with a young man who is a member of the oppressed class of burakumin.

1907—Itoh Hirobumi, the Japanese general of Korea, forces Korean King Kojong's abdication and the signing of the Korean-Japanese Convention of 1907, giving Japan effective control of Korea's affairs.

1908—First group of Japanese emigrants to Brazil departs from Kobe.

1909—Itoh Hirobumi assassinated on his arrival at Harbin in Manchuria by Korean nationalist An Chung-Gun. The city government of Tokyo gives more than 2,000 flowering cherry saplings as a goodwill present to Washington D.C.

1910—High Treason Incident of 1910: Kotoku Shuhsui implicated in a plot to assassinate Emperor Meiji; he is executed the next year. Korea is made a colony of Japan; leadership post of government general of Korea established. Ishikawa Takuboku publishes his first collection of *tanka* verse, *Ichiaku no Suna (A Handful of Sand)*.

1911—Philosopher Nishida Kitaro publishes *Zen No Kenkyu (A Study of Good)*.

1912—Death of Emperor Meiji; accession of Emperor Taisho. Japan sends two athletes to the 5th Summer Olympic Games at Stockholm.

1914—Japan enters WWI on the side of Great Britain and its allies.

1919—Samil Independence Movement (1919–1920) begins in Korea and is viciously suppressed by the Japanese. As a victor nation of WWI, Japan is a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles. Arishima Takeo publishes the melodramatic novel *Aru Onna (A Certain Woman)*, which depicts the self-destruction of a strong-willed woman.

1920—Nikolaevsk Incident: Japanese residents in the town of Nikolaevsk near the mouth of the Amur river are murdered. Morito Incident: Morito Tatsuo, an assistant professor at Tokyo University, is imprisoned for three months after publishing an article on the social theory of the anarchist Peter Alekseevich Kropotkin. League of Nations established; Japan granted permanent membership in the League Council.

1921—Shiga Naoya begins serialization of his masterwork, the novel *An'ya Koro (A Dark Night's Passing)*. Prime Minister Hara Takashi assassinated; Crown Prince Hirohito, later named Emperor Showa, becomes regent to the ailing Emperor Taisho.

1922—Suiheisha (Society of Levelers) founded to fight discrimination against the burakumin class. Japan Communist Party established; frequently oppressed by the government; it's not legally constituted until after WWII. The Imperial Hotel, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, is completed.

1923—Tokyo Earthquake of 1923: 140,000 die. In its wake, several thousand Koreans are massacred by vigilante groups and police. Toranomon Incident: assassination attempt on Prince Regent Hirohito; Japanese radicals murdered by police.

1925—Soviet-Japanese Basic Convention signed; diplomatic relations between Japan and the Soviet Union established. Enactment of the Peace Preservation Law of 1925; freedoms of speech and assembly severely restricted. First regular radio broadcasts begun by Tokyo Broadcasting Station (TBS), a predecessor of Japan's public NHK, formed the following year. Arthur David Whaley publishes the first of his six volume translation of *Genji Monogatari (Tale of Genji)*.

The Showa Era

Perhaps one of the most turbulent and bloody eras in Japan's history. In its first decades, an ultra-nationalist coalition of right-wing politicians and army officers seized control of the country, engaging in domestic political repression and setting Japan on a course of militaristic expansion into continental Asia. This culminated in the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945 and entry into WWII. Japan's defeat ushered in a period of occupation by the Allied forces and sweeping democratic reforms that included a new constitution for Japan. The post-war decades saw recovery from the war, re-entry into the world community, and phenomenal economic growth that transformed Japan into the world's second largest economy by the close of the Showa era.

1926—Death of Emperor Taisho; accession of Emperor Showa.

1927—Nanjing Incident: Japanese, British, and U.S. consulates in Nanjing attacked by Chinese Nationalist soldiers; Tanaka Giicchi cabinet dispatches troops to Shandong Providence in China. Financial crisis of 1927.

1928—March 15th Incident: 1,658 suspected Communists arrested, and charges are brought against 483. Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin assassinated by Japanese army officers.

1929—April 16th Incident: 600 to 700 suspected Communists arrested, and charges brought against 339.

1930—Showa Depression (1930–35) begins. Prime Minister Hamaguchi mortally wounded at Tokyo Station by a right-wing radical.

1931—March Incident: planned coup by rightist army officers and civilians aborted. Hamagogi Incident: conquest of Manchuria by the Japanese Guandong Army begins (1931–33). October Incident: leaders of a planned military coup arrested. Gosho Heinosuke directs Japan's first successful sound film, *Madamu to Nyobo (The Neighbor's Wife and Mine)*.

1932—Sakuradamon Incident: assassination attempt on Emperor Showa. Shanghai Incident: Chinese and Japanese troops clash in Shanghai. Guandong Army establishes the state of Manchukuo; the last member of the Quing Dynasty (1644–1912) is appointed as the head of state. League of Blood Incident: prominent politicians and businessmen are murdered by members of the ultra-nationalist party. May 15th Incident: Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi assassinated during an attempted coup by young naval officers.

1933—Japan withdraws from the League of Nations in response to criticism of its aggression in Manchuria. Shimpeitai Incident: leaders of planned coup arrested.

1934—Teijin Incident: government officials implicated in stock scandal.

1935—Controversy over the constitutional status of the emperor.

1936—Second London Naval Conference: Japan withdraws after rejection of its proposal that the Japanese fleet be granted full parity with the fleets of the U.S. and Britain. February 26th Incident: 1,400 troops participate in an unsuccessful coup d'etat. Observance of May Day prohibited in Japan.

1937—Sino-Japanese War of 1937–45 commences. In the Nanjing Massacre (1937–38) conservative estimates are that Japanese forces slaughter 140,000 Chinese civilians and prisoners of war following the taking of the city. Popular Front Incident: around 400 liberals and leftists are arrested.

1938—Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro declares a policy of non-recognition of Nationalist China and calls for "the establishment of a new order in East Asia." *Ikite Iru Heitai (Living Soldiers)*, a novella by Ishikawa Tatsuzo dealing with the taking of Nanjing by Japanese forces, is banned. Daisetzu Teitaro Suzuki publishes *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture* in Kyoto.

1939—Nomonhan Incident: heavy fighting with Soviet troops along the Manchurian-Mongolian border ends in a rout of Japanese forces. National Service Draft Ordinance is issued to assure an adequate supply of labor in strategic industries.

1940—Tripartite Pact (Axis Powers) signed by Japan, Germany, and Italy. Treasures of the Shosoin are publicly exhibited for the first time. Tsuda Sokichi's revisionist study of the prehistory of Japan, *Jindaishi no Kenkyu*, is banned.

1941—Compulsory school system of Kokumin Gakko established to "train loyal subjects of the emperor," Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact signed. Talks between Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburo and Secretary of State Cordell Hull begin in an attempt to resolve the stalemate in U.S.-Japan relations. Sorge Incident: German journalist taken into custody by Tokyo police and charged with spying for the Soviet Union. Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, the Malay Peninsula, and the Philippines; war declared against the U.S., Great Britain, and the Netherlands.

1942—Japanese forces occupy the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, and Burma. Japanese combined fleet defeated in Battle of Midway. Railway tunnel completed beneath the Kammon Strait, connecting southwestern Honshu and northern Kyushu.

1943—Japanese Army forces expelled from Guadalcanal. Serialization of *Sasameyuki (The Makioka Sisters)*, Tanizaki Junichiro's novel about four upper-middle-class sisters, is suspended under pressure from the military. Death of Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku. Annihilation of Japanese forces on the island of Attu in the Aleutians.

1944—Saipan falls. Large-scale U.S. bombing raids on Japanese main islands begin. Remaining Japanese Navy surface units mostly sunk or damaged in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, Philippine Archipelago retaken by Allies.

1945—Iwo Jima and Okinawa fall after great loss of life. Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan accepts the terms of the Potsdam Declaration; Emperor Showa announces the end of hostilities in a national radio broadcast. Douglas MacArthur, supreme commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), arrives at Atsugi Airfield near Tokyo to oversee the occupation of Japan (1945–52); instrument of surrender signed aboard the U.S.S. Missouri. SCAP headquarters orders the arrest of suspected Japanese war criminals, issues directives aimed at the democratization of Japan that include the release of political prisoners and the breakup of industrial and financial combines called zaibatsu. Revival of Japan Socialist Party and the Japan Communist Party. New Law passed; women given the right to vote. Labor Union Law issued; labor reforms of 1945–47.

1946—Emperor Showa renounces his divinity in his New Year's address to the Japanese people. Occupation purge of prewar and wartime Japanese leaders. Implementation of Land Reforms of 1946. Emergency anti-inflation measures by SCAP; "new yen" currency reform. Emperor Showa begins a series of goodwill tours of the country. First U.S. education missions arrive in Japan. Commencement of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (1946–48) and the war trials. Shokuryo Mede (Food May Day): 300,000 people demonstrate in front of the Imperial Palace due to shortages. Constitution of Japan created, it goes into effect in 1947. Ruth Fulton Benedict publishes *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, a sociological study of the Japanese.

1947—Enactment of the Fundamental Law of Education, the Labor Standards, the Anti-Monopoly Law, the Local Autonomy Law, and the Child Welfare Law. Dazai Osamu publishes the novel *Shayo (The Setting Sun)*.

1948—Showa Denko Scandal: government officials charged with receipt of bribes. Eugenic Protection Law passed, it contains provisions governing abortion and sterilization.

1949—Comprehensive anti-inflation measures introduced; a constant exchange rate of 360 yen to the U.S. dollar is set. Taira Incident, Shimoyama Incident, Mitaka Incident, and Matsukawa Incident: public opinion turns against the Japan Communist Party. Emphasis of occupation reforms shifts from democratization to economic growth. Yukawa Hideki awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics; he is the first Japanese to receive the Nobel Prize.

1950—Red Purge: 1,177 government employees who are also Japanese Communist Party members removed from office. National Police Reserve created.

1952—U.S.-Japan Administrative Agreement signed. San Francisco Peace Treaty goes into effect; occupation ends and Japan regains its sovereignty. May Day Incident: 1,232 demonstrating workers arrested under the Riot Law. Subversive Activities Prevention Law enacted. Japan sends a team of athletes, the first in post-WWII period, to participate in the 15th Summer Olympic games in Helsinki. First exchange of scholars between Japan and the U.S. conducted under the auspices of the Fulbright Commission. National Police Reserve reformed as National Safety Forces, a forerunner to the modern Self Defense Forces.

1953—Television broadcasting begins in Japan.

1954—Shipbuilding scandal contributes to the fall of the Yoshida Shigeru cabinet. U.S.-Japan Mutual Defense Agency and Self Defense Forces (SDF) established; Defense Assistance Agreement signed. The Ministry of Education establishes a scholarship system, Monbusho Scholars, to support study by foreign students in Japan. *Jigokumon (Gate of Hell)*, a film by Kinugasa Teinosuke, receives the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival.

1955—First Atomic Disasters Anniversary World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Hiroshima. First transistor radios go on sale.

1956—Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration reestablishes diplomatic relations between the two countries. Japan granted membership in the United Nations. Mishima Yukio publishes the novel *Kinkakuji (The Temple of the Golden Pavilion)*, a portrait of a priest who sets fire to the famous temple and survives.

1958—Construction of Tokyo Tower, a duplicate of Paris's Eiffel Tower, is completed.

1959—Beginning of protests against revision of U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Metric system officially adopted. Ise Bay typhoon crosses central Honshu; some 5,000 reported dead or missing.

1960—Miike Strike: 282 day strike at Miike Coal Mines. Second U.S.-Japan Security Treaty signed in Washington; demonstrators against ratification besiege the National Diet Building in Tokyo.

Japan Socialist Party chairman Asanuma Inejiro assassinated by a right-wing youth.

1961—Shimanaka Incident: right-wing zealot attempts murder of the publisher of the magazine *Chuo Koron*.

1962—Sale of thalidomide in Japan halted due to effects on children. Abe Kobo publishes the avant-garde novel *Suna No Onna (The Woman in the Dunes)*.

1964—High speed Shinkansen trains begin operation between Tokyo and Osaka. The 18th Summer Olympic games, the first hosted by an Asian city, are held in Tokyo.

1965—Korea-Japan Treaty of 1965 signed and normal diplomatic relations restored. Tomonaga Shin-ichiro shares Nobel Prize for Physics.

1966—The Beatles perform at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo; some 2,000 police provide security for these five concerts.

1968—University upheavals of 1968–69 begin. Ogasawara Islands returned to Japanese sovereignty by U.S.. Kawabata Yasunari wins Nobel Prize for Literature.

1969—Sato-Nixon Communiqué: agreement is reached to revert Okinawa back to Japanese sovereignty by 1972.

1970—Novelist Mishima Yukio leads his private ultra-nationalist group Tate no Kai in an attempt to provoke an uprising by Ground Self Defense Forces. Failing, he commits traditional seppuku suicide.

1971—Revaluation of yen (yen 308=U.S. $1) depresses Japanese economy.

1972—Red Army Faction Incidents: two police officers are killed during arrests. Interrogations reveal 14 other deaths in internal squabbles of the faction; 24 die in Japanese Red Army attack on Lod Airport in Tel Aviv, Israel. Okinawa returned to Japanese sovereignty by U.S.. China-Japan Joint Communiqué of 1972 issued, for normal diplomatic relations between Japan and the People's Republic of China.

1973—Oil Crisis of 1973: Oil prices spiral, shortages hit Japan hardest of developed nations. Floating exchange rate introduced. Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei gives a grant of $10 million to major U.S. universities engaged in Japanese Studies. Esaki Reona shares Nobel Peace Prize for Physics.

1974—Resignation of Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei amid allegations of involvement in financial scandals. Ex-Prime Minister Sato Eisaku receives Nobel Peace Prize.

1975—At the invitation of U.S. President Gerald R. Ford, Emperor Showa and Empress Nagako make a state visit to the U.S.

1976—Lockheed Scandal: Japanese officials are charged with taking bribes from Lockheed Aircraft Corp.

1977—Japan sets territorial limit at 12 nautical miles from coasts and fishery zone at 200 nautical miles from coasts.

1978—New Tokyo International Airport (Narita Airport) opens.

1980—Japanese automobile production surpasses that of the U.S.

1982—Chinese and South Korean governments protest the content of Japanese school history textbooks, and the glossing over of Japan's role as an aggressor in WWII. Japan agrees to revise the disputed passages.

1983—Tokyo Disneyland opens.

1984—Korean President Chun Du-hwan makes a state visit to Japan, Emperor Showa expresses "regret" over an "unfortunate past" in reference to Korean-Japan relations.

1985—Amendment to Japanese Nationality goes into effect. Eligibility allowances for both maternal and paternal lineage. First cases of AIDS reported in Japan. Nakasone Yasuhiro becomes the first Prime Minister to visit Yasukuni Shrine since WWII in an official capacity. Strong yen puts Japan on top of world markets (yen 80 = U.S. $1).

The Heisei Era

The year 2002 is the fifteenth year of the Heisei Era, named for the current ruling Japanese emperor. The son of now-deceased Emperor Showa, most of the war-time legacy of the old emperor is considered to have been washed away by the Japanese nation. The question on the lips of the world is what legacy this new emperor will carve for himself on the world stage? He inherited the world's second largest economy at the height of its economic power, only to see 1990s Japan slide into its deepest and longest postwar recession. Meanwhile, Japan's neighbors watch with foreboding as debates rage daily about the true status of the SDF as a peacekeeping or military force. This concern is heightened by the call to declare the hin-no-maru flag with its crimson circle and white field as well as the song *Kimi-gayo* as national emblems. Should defacing them be prosecutable offenses? They are only optionally used in public gatherings.

1988—3% Consumption Tax pushed through diet by Liberal Democratic Party. Some later blame the economic slump in the 1990s partially on the effect of this tax on domestic businesses.

1991—Bad feelings in countries where Japan has invested begin to peak. Australians, Americans, and Canadians object to the wholesale purchase of real estate in their countries by rich Japanese. Fear begets "Japan-bashing" in the press.

1992—A South Korean professor and a Buddhist monk work together to repatriate the severed noses of 2,000 Koreans slain by invading Japanese soldiers in the seventeenth century; the noses had been taken to Japan as proof of victory and preserved in a tomb in Tokyo. According to a *Boston Globe* article, ubiquitous Japanese vending machines routinely dispense roses, pearls, underwear, hamburgers, beer, pornographic comics, condoms, servings of rice, dried squid snacks, noodle soup, and binoculars.

1993—The economic-bubble economy of Japan, which enjoyed a powerful yen, officially bursts. Inflated land prices, driven up by numerous loans taken by Yakuza operations, are discovered, causing insolvency in many banks and securities when the Yakuza refuses to repay the loans.

1994—A Tokyo-based drug company markets a pre-meal pill to make bowel movements completely odorless. Some fear that the pill will increase Japan's obsession with cleanliness. Psychiatrists state that overreaction to unpleasant smells is already a cause of unsociable behavior among the Japanese.

1995—The Great Hanshin Quake levels much of central Kobe, leaving over 5,000 dead. Six people choke to death on sticky rice cakes, o-mochi, served as a traditional New Year's Eve dish; police believe several deaths were caused by families inconvenienced by elderly family members.

1996—A 4-year-old boy drowns while playing unattended; meanwhile, his mother is playing pachinko, a pinball/slot-machine craze sweeping the country. More than two dozen toddler deaths are attributed to the growing obsession with the game.

1997—A cult, Aum Shinrikyo, puts sarin nerve gas in Tokyo subways declaring the beginning of doomsday; the incident kills 12, injures 3,800, and spurs countrywide police raids on Aum compounds. To the public's horror, police find enough sarin and other chemical agents to kill all 20 million people in Tokyo. A ten year old boy beheads three classmates and puts one head on a spike of the school gate; violent manga are later blamed by a shocked nation. It's publicly revealed that North Korean agents have been infiltrating Japan and kidnapping Japanese citizens for use in North Korea. Japan apologizes for the use of "comfort women" (sex slaves) by WWII troops and offers remuneration to those still living.

1998—Hunsen Scandal: political officials and officers of securities firms are found to be paying hush money to Yakuza to prevent disruption of business operations, contributing to the worst economic depression to hit Japan in history and spreading across Asia. Many banks close their doors and the government steps in to stabilize failing securities and banks. Japan and the U.S. jointly intervene to stabilize the currency markets (yen 150=U.S. $1).

1999—The SDF adds new advanced equipment to its naval fleet, including a carrier, "to effect rescue of Japanese citizens caught in war zones"; citizen groups protest it as militarization. North Korean mini-sub discovered by SDF patrols; the entire crew commits suicide. In a later incident, an unidentified ship escapes pursuit; it is the first time in 30 years the SDF has fired on a ship. In late September, Japan suffers its worst ever nuclear accident at the Tokaimura uranium conversion plant 80 miles southwest of Tokyo; ten thousand evacuate the region and forty-nine are treated for radiation exposure. Amidst controversy, the "hin-no-maru" flag, a red circle on a white field, is made the official national flag of Japan. Okinawa protests. Several incidents arise with school principals refusing to fly the flag and committing suicide when pressured otherwise. *Kimmo-dayo*, a song praising a thousand years of rule by the emperor, is made the national anthem, stirring similar controversy within public discussion.

2000—In March, a Tokyo subway train jumps its track and kills three, injuring thirty-one. Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi is criticized for getting a hair cut only 5 minutes after setting up a task force to investigate. In April, PM Obuchi mysteriously dies; the government keeps his illness and coma a secret for over 48 hours before allowing the press to announce his initial stroke; he dies shortly thereafter. LDP secretary Yoshiro Mori is quickly elected internally and named prime minister. He is the most unpopular PM in 40 years due to involvement in several scandals and a political stance that Japan is a "divine nation" centered on the emperor—echoing WWII ultra nationalism. Mori further loses approval when he dissolves the lower house to force new elections in June. Japan's Empress Dowager Nagako, widow of Emperor Hirohito, dies at age 97. Japan is blasted by the U.S. for continued whaling of three endangered species in international water; Japan ignores the protests stating that it is killing the whales for "scientific research" purposes. Japanese police gain the right to tap phones, fax, and e-mail. Japan renews its five year four billion dollar security accord with the U.S.. A 7.3 magnitude earthquake injures 40 people in western Japan. Japanese parliament passes a major IT bill providing low cost access to the Internet for millions of citizens with the aim of Japan becoming the world's most advanced IT nation. Japan's economy continues its downward slide.

2001—In February the *U.S.S. Greenville*, a 6,900-ton U.S. nuclear submarine on practice dives, inadvertently sinks the 499-ton Japanese fishing trawler, the *Ehime Maru*. Nine die, including four 17-year old students; PM Mori is criticized for continuing to play golf upon hearing the news. In April reformer Junichiro Koizumi is elected as the 11th prime minister in 13 years; he promises to select a cabinet based on merit rather than backroom deals. PM Koizumi stirs controversy by visiting the Shrine Memorial for WWII soldiers. With a dying stock market, bankrupt corporations and a crippled banking sector, Japan's economy continues its ten year weakening and raises concerns that it can continue to be the second largest economy in the world; the yen once again plunges, 130 to U.S. $1. Amid concerns about terrorist activity in Japan after the September 11th WTC attacks, PM Koizumi passes legislation to allow the SDF to exist in a more military capacity by assisting U.S. troops in non-combat roles; discussion of amending the Occupation Constitution or scrapping it altogether once again becomes a hot topic of debate. In June, a 37-year old former janitor walks into four classrooms of 1st and 2nd graders in an Osaka elementary school to stab and kill 8 children, all aged 7 and 8. In July a British citizen living in a "gaijin house" and working as a bar hostess in Roppongi, Tokyo mysteriously disappears for four months, causing a bout of national soul searching. With more police officers assigned to finding her than the Aum Sarin gas attacks, her body is found in a shallow cave cut into eight pieces, her head entombed in a block of cement. The murderer, a real estate speculator from the '80s bubble economy, is eventually found but only after extreme measures are taken by the bereaved British family to call attention to the missing woman. The killer is reported to be guilty of over 200 abductions, druggings and rapes over the course of 20 years. Due to being a Westerner, hers is the highest profile case in years of mysterious deaths of foreign women working illegally in Japan, mostly Asian, which have gone unreported and uninvestigated.

2002—Female sumo tournaments begin to gain popularity. In January an SDF naval cutter fires upon and sinks an unidentified fishing trawler that fired upon it first. Dredging the wreckage reveals it to be North Korean. This is the first time a SDF ship has fired upon and sunk an enemy vessel. In February, Crown Princess Masako, 37, gives birth to a baby princess thus ensuring imperial succession into the next generation though a male child is still desired to ascend the throne as emperor. Experts predict a mini-baby boom as young Japanese women seek to emulate the princess's fortunes. The incidence of "girl gangs" is on the rise. Out of boredom, they lure men into alleys ostensibly for sex but then beat the salarymen up in order to rob them. Japan's National Space Development Agency (NASDA) announces a 13 square foot Japanese Tea Ceremony room slated for inclusion in the Japanese made multi-billion yen Kibo Laboratory Module. The Kibo Module, meaning "hope" in Japanese, will be launched and permanently docked with the ISS, the International Space Station, in 2004. The zero-gravity environment of the tea room in space will provide unique challenges for relaxing with a steaming cup of green tea.

The Mysterious, Disturbing and Weird

In youth, there is the illusion of immortality that evil can be conquered, that no wrong can go unpunished. That is inexperience and foolishness. In my foolish days I traveled the roads looking to challenge any swordsman to prove to myself I was the best in the land. There was one time, however, that I faced an opponent when I did not even unsheathe my sword, much to my shame for many years. It was in a village market. A stranger was dressed in simple green robes. He appeared to be a humble monk, but a menace so savage and vile emanated from him that I could only grit my teeth as I passed this foe. I did nothing. Any action, I knew, would result in instant death.

—Musashi Miyamoto, *The Sixth Ring*

What follows are either actual events too bizarre to run in the normal media, or urban legends. You'll have to decide yourself which is which. Feel free to use these for scenario seeds or background events in your campaign.

1890—Witnesses see a group of 45 religious pilgrims vanish from sight on a public street in Kyoto. To this day, ghostly chanting can still be heard from time to time.

1890—The Miroku Buddha, a gift from Korea in the eighth century, reportedly cries blood on the night of the Tonghak Rebellion.

1895—A rash of suicides by top leaders spreads like an epidemic across the nation; most blame the end of the Sino-Japanese War.

1900—Hell Night. On New Year's Eve, random fires break out all over the countryside. Fire brigades are strained to the limit but manage to contain the fires, with help from volunteers, after a week.

1901—In Gifu and Aichi Prefectures, reports circulate of a massive dragon-like form appearing in the sky in the early hours.

1910—An expedition, headed by Shirase Nobu, departs to explore Antarctica.

1932—Japanese officers in Manchuria discover a warehouse full of priceless Chinese imperial treasure in their raids of the countryside. Some is plundered, but most is shipped to Tokyo Museum as spoils of war. News of the find is suppressed by the military.

1935—Kiyomaro Takeuchi discovers a 1,900-year-old document in Ibaraki Prefecture, containing evidence that Jesus (Joshua) is buried in Herai Village in Aomori District, Japan. The document being potentially explosive in nature, the government suppresses the information and confiscates the material for storage in Tokyo National Museum. The original is destroyed in the 1944–45 Allied firebombing of Tokyo.

1938—An apparition of the Bosatsu of Mercy, Kannon, appears to Japan's military and political leaders begging them not to go to war. The figure says untold suffering and a great evil will befall the Japanese people.

1938—A large group of joko shamanesses go into seclusion in mountain caves, declaring they have foreseen the dire consequences of the current regime's actions. Others flee the country for China and the Americas.

1942—Numerous reports of encounters with dangerous aquatic creatures by Japanese officers on Pacific-held islands are collected in *Sekite ni Mugen (Rock Garden on Infinity)*, a compilation of deranged memoirs and Mythos haiku. The whole is published by Shintaro Ikeda, an officer of Biological Unit 731.

1943—Late Yayoi period (ca. 100–300 C.E.) Toro site discovered.

1944—Biological Unit 731's attempts at germ warfare fail, though crude balloons full of biological contagion are dropped on the state of California. Japanese engineers receive a new experimental craft from their ally Germany. When activated for the first time, the silvery disc shaped craft disappears in a blinding flash of light.

1945—For several months after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, strange events are said to occur in those cities. The dead walk the streets and abominations randomly materialize. Spiritualists say the fabric of reality has been severely and irreparably shredded at the two sites.

1946—Aizawa Tadahiro discovers the Iwajuku Site, the first recognized Paleolithic site in Japan.

1953—First case of pollution-related Minamata Disease reported. A strange gigantic creature (Gazira) surfaces and damages parts of Osaka Port.

1954—Lucky Dragon Incident: a Japanese fishing boat is contaminated by fallout from a U.S. atomic test on Bikini in the Marshal Islands. Excavation of eighth century imperial palace at Heijokyo (Nara) begins.

1956—Maki Aritsune leads a party of climbers who make the first ascent of Mt. Manaslu in the Himalayas. Native guides report sighting the mythical yeti on the journey. The team reportedly returns with a copy of *Jinji Fejing* taken from an abandoned monastery.

1957—A Japanese expedition establishes Showa Station, a base camp in Antarctica. Several team members die mysteriously and one goes insane from isolation. The news is kept from the public.

1958—Fishermen in the Japan Sea capture gargantuan specimens of squid and octopus on six separate occasions this year; radiation is blamed for the mutations. Gazira surfaces and strikes Fukuoka.

1965—Formation of the Gensuikin, the Japan Congress against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs.

1966—Ibuse Masuji completes serialization of the novel *Kuroi Ame (Black Rain)*, a study of the horrific consequences of the atomic bombing at Hiroshima. Endo Shusaku publishes the novel *Chinmoku (Silence)*, depicting the persecution of Christians in late seventeenth century Japan.

1969—Divers off the coast of Okinawa discover curious metallic discs. They dub them the Mishu-Tai. They are put on display at Ryukyu University in Naha city.

1972—Takamatsuzuka Tomb excavated; polychrome wall paintings are found to date to 700 A.D. Gazira tramples Nagoya.

1975—An office building in Tokyo erected over the site of a WWII prisoner camp is so badly haunted that floors 3, 9, and 13 are closed off to the public.

1978—It is revealed that known convicted war criminals are enshrined at the National Yasukuni Shrine. Gazira sighted in Okinawa.

1981—First wave of displaced Japanese war orphans in China begin visits. Toxic vapors in Aomori Prefecture kill a group camping near Mount Hakoda.

1983—Project Yūrei detects and records ectoplasmic energy for the first time.

1984—Vulcanologists note a small volcanic island that briefly surfaces in the Pacific 200 miles off the mainland coast, but it sinks again after a few weeks; Gazira is reported nearby.

1987—The religious sect Buddha's Tears publishes a prayer book called *The Doctrine of Buddha's Tears*. Popularity of the cult begins to swell.

1988—Tokyo National Museum curators quietly disclose possession of the imperial treasures of China which were taken in 1931–33 as war spoils.

1989—A rash of "hin-no-maru slayings" baffles police. Over the course of six months, seven alleged ultra-nationalists are found slain by apparent hara-kiri wounds with a white sheet placed over each. The resulting bloodstain resembles the national flag. No culprit is found.

1990—The Japanese government formally refuses to relinquish possession of the imperial treasures of China now valued at billions of U.S. dollars, despite repeated requests by the Chinese government through diplomatic channels. Numerous sightings early in the year of the lake monster Ishii causes a booming tourist industry around Lake Akida.

1991—The University of Japan puts its brain collection on display. It contains the brains of 120 notable personages. They are put in the museum rather than studied because of the Japanese veneration for the dead.

1994—The Hokkaido Museum of History is broken into and robbed. Curators refuse to disclose missing items, claiming it too soon to know. Gazira stomps Nagasaki Island.

1995—Sport divers discover underwater pyramids beyond the small island of Yonaguni, and later other structures are found at eight separate locations on or near Okinawa. For years, this discovery is largely ignored by the media and academia.

1996—Strange glowing filaments in the dusk sky are reported by observers; millennialists declare it a tear in the universe. Sony Corp. admits to the existence of a psi lab used to prove the existence of, and to harness, extra-sensory perception (ESP). At the same time they admit to the psi lab, Sony executives announce its closing—they had discovered all they needed.

1998—North Korea fires a multi-stage missile over Japanese waters, declares it a failed satellite. India and Pakistan become nuclear powers. An alarmed Japan begins to reconsider its military role in the region. *Project Yūrei White Paper* published on HR-DVD.

1999—Ignored by most major corporations, Japanese computer experts declare that Japan is five years behind the U.S. preparing for the Y2K Millennium Bug. Japanese scientists declare that they have taken the cloning of the sheep, Dolly, one step further; human cloning now a possibility. A second death attributable to platform shoes occurs in Japan when the 25 year old victim is unable to hit the brakes in her car; earlier in the year a 25 year old woman slips in her 5 inch platform shoes, receiving a fatal skull fracture. A Japanese prostitute claims the ability to predict men's futures, but she must have sex with them to do so. Opened in 1996, the Cosmo Isle Hakui UFO Museum is finally able to complete its alien contacts and abductions exhibits after years of external pressure from anonymous sources not to do so.

2000—Survivors of a sunk Japanese trawler are rescued; when asked what happened they explain a cow falling from the clear blue sky hit the ship like a bomb. A Russian Air Force crew later admits that a cow stolen in Siberia went stir crazy in the aircraft, forcing them to shove it out at 30,000 feet. In September a family of four is murdered in their home by a teenager. Later in December, a 15-year old newspaper delivery boy sneaks into a home to stab three neighbors to death. Japanese scientists invent a flatulence detector. A man is arrested in a puppy amputation scam after it is revealed he mutilated the animals to plead for donations. Kashima University expels four medical students, though more are suspected, after it is discovered they pelted fellow students with human brains from cadavers in the science lab. A mythical snake creature, the "tsuchinoko," first documented in the seventh century book the *Nihonjiki*, is found in Mikata, Hyogo Prefecture. The black reptilian creature is 12–31 inches long with a large head and poisonous fangs. On December 29, Okinawa's Ryukyu University announces the existence of underwater pyramids (first discovered in 1995 but not officially acknowledged until now) at the ninety foot depth; conjecture is that the artifacts are more than 12,000 years old.

2001—In May, the events of the "Yonaguni Monuments" story take place. The first fully automated convenience store is opened in Tokyo featuring advanced vending machines with CCD cameras, touch displays and optical sensors using broadband connections to notify the warehouse of low stocks. This "automat" offers over 200 products at 3 temperature ranges—including cash, DVDs, concert tickets, hotel reservations, dried squid, green tea, beer and boxers; some feel this lack of personal interaction will further accelerate cases of hikikomori. *Kawaii*, "cute culture," now dominates the economy, totaling a market share of 25 billion dollars per year. A subculture of Japanese teens called *freeta* crave mind altering experiences, turning to ingestion of psychedelic mushrooms and rave dance culture at Tokyo's trendy Yoyogi Park. "Godzilla Meat," a 3.5 ounce can with the famous monster on the label, becomes a craze in Tokyo; speculation is that the contents are actually corned beef.

2002—In late March, a second Todai expedition to the submerged pyramidal structures pulls a massive stone pillar, dubbed the Monolith of Okinawa, from the water; it is shipped to Tokyo for display. In early September, prime Okinawan researchers in a Ryu-Dai sponsored expedition find a secret chamber in the largest underwater pyramid, but are unable to open it. It comes to the attention of authorities an underground Internet BBS, "Channel 2," receiving over eight million hits a day, has become an interchange for the disgruntled fringe of society who post desires to beat up their bosses, kill their teachers or bomb kindergartens. Several perpetrators of shocking murders, including the recent stabbings in an Osaka elementary school, as well the hijacker of a Fukuoka bus, are believed to have been frequent posters to Channel 2. A 70-year old man choking on mochi, a sticky rice cake, is saved by his quick acting daughter who uses a vacuum cleaner on his throat. Cosmetic firms experience brisk sales for products that reduce the odor of "nureal" also known as "old man smell," a pheromone which becomes more prominent as people age. Japanese sciences successfully create a transgenic animal combining a pig with the Vitamin A-producing DNA of spinach, "spork." This is the first step in a planned mixed-species cloning project aimed at producing permanent transplant organ animals for humans as well as more effective food sources. ☯

APPENDIX THREE:

THE SILK ROAD

The Mythos crawls the pathways of Asia.

Silk, the noble textile of emperors, product of a living creature, the *Bombyx mori* spinning moth, domesticated thousands of years ago by man and totally dependent upon him for survival. Its silk cocoons, when spun, have a living quality and when dyed, a luxurious luster. It is this wondrous material that wound its way in trade in directions both east and west, creating a road paved with silk and wealth.

Dating back to this age of the Silk Road, the economy and culture of Asia has been deeply interconnected; large caravans brought trade and commerce between the Middle Kingdom, China, and the many outlying kingdoms including the island kingdom of Wa, early Japan. In the eight years it might take to journey to Persia or India and back, many beliefs and customs were exported along with the labors of the silk worms; knowledge of the Great Old Ones was no exception. Buddhism trod this path to Japan as did T'ang Dynasty court customs emulated by Prince Shotoku's ruling elite in Japan. A Taoist might say that the Silk Road brought great prosperity but it also spread great darkness across the continent, darkness patiently waiting for prey to become entangled in a web of madness and doom.

This appendix furnishes a brief reference to Mythos doings mentioned in previous works of H. P. Lovecraft, writers following in his footsteps and, of course, material developed within *Call of Cthulhu* source books and scenarios as well as ideas of my own. These sources are not listed in this section, but rather, the focus is to provide jumping off points for keepers who don't wish to confine their adventures to Japanese soil. Perhaps elsewhere these tenuous threads will be woven into a fine work to smother the life from even the most clever of investigators.

BHUTAN

Size: 18,000 sq. mi.
Population: 2 million
Major Cities: Thimpu (capital, 14,000), Paro
Languages: Dzongkha
Religions: Buddhist 3/4, Hindu 1/4
Government: Monarchy

Walled by the Himalayas and almost unreachable by most forms of transportation without considerable hardship, this timeless Buddhist land has existed in intentional isolation from the rest of the world until the last two decades. As a result, Bhutan is an economically poor country but is more than equalled in cultural wealth. The capital, Thimpu, located in a scenic wooded valley, is akin to walking back in time, and bears a certain charm. The main airport exists in the small town of Paro. There has been a great blow to Bhutan in the last few years: In 1998 the famed Takshang Monastery, a retreat of revered Guru Rimpoche in the 8th century, was destroyed by fire.

For centuries, Bhutan has held an open secret amongst Buddhists: due to its remoteness it is has become the repository of many sacred and valuable sutras and tomes from other Buddhist kingdoms when they were threatened by war or invasion. Consequently, many rare and valuable works of a religious nature, in addition to a considerable cache of Cthulhu Mythos tomes, have found a home in the mountaintop monasteries of Bhutan. Mythos Scholars believe that the original clay tablets of the *R'Lyeh Text* were hidden there by the Tcho-Tcho peoples. The fire of the Takshang Monastery was perhaps used to cover the trail of a theft of such a valuable collection.

BURMA/MYANMAR

Size: 410,000 sq. mi.
Population: 45 million
Major Cities: Rangoon (capital, 4 million), Mandalay
Languages: Burmese
Religions: Theravada Buddhist 4/5
Government: Military Dictatorship

Torn by fifty years of subjugation by harsh warlords and brutal rebels, Burma dwells in a nightmarish twilight of the twentieth century as its leaders attempt to encourage foreign investment and at the same time enslave the population. Burma today is hardly touched by Westernization: for travelers it is a difficult and dangerous destination. The capital of Rangoon, enfolded within a tropical jungle, bustles with street stalls though authorities try to keep a close eye on travelers. The Thai-Burma border is a haven for drug smugglers, rebel forces and military skirmishes. It demarcates the infamous "Golden Triangle" of opium production. Governments on both sides of the border here are highly corrupt with some drug lords maintaining private armies in the thousands. Needless to say, land travel on the border is extremely dangerous.

Asia

RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
UZBEKISTAN
MONGOLIA
JAPAN
IRAN
AFGHANISTAN
CHINA
INDIA
BURMA
THAILAND
VIETNAM
PHILIPPINES
SRI LANKA
MALDIVES
Colombo
Male
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
Jakarta
AUSTRALIA
Arabian Sea
Bay of Bengal
Indian Ocean
Philippine Sea
Scale 1:48,000,000
Azimuthal Equal-Area Projection

The potent *Black Sutra* was written in Burma by U Pao around 700 C.E. It is within today's Burmese nest of vipers that some of the world's most powerful Cthulhu Mythos artifacts still exist. During WWII the Japanese drove the British forces out of this colony and encouraged Burmese support in exchange for independence from British rule but a resistance movement thwarted those designs. The true reason for the Japanese Imperial Army's presence was to find the hidden Plateau of Sung and exterminate the Tcho-Tcho tribes in Burma. And indeed, the Plateau of Sung is said to exist in some form in this country. On the plateau are the ruins of the legendary city of Alaozar, now believed destroyed. A Tcho-Tcho cult, the Brotherhood of the Star Treader, still worships the Great Old One Lloigor, twin of Zhar, imprisoned beneath the plateau. The strife of the Golden Triangle inadvertently protects access to Sung. Agents of the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus control several drug lords and, by extension, a standing army of 5,000 mercenaries. Complicating matters is a cult to Yidhra operating in the same area.

CAMBODIA

Size: 11,000 sq. mi.

Population: 11 million

Major Cities: Phnom Penh (Capital, 1 million), Udong

Languages: Khmer, French and English

Religions: Mostly Buddhist

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

The Khmer Empire once straddled the modern countries of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The only remnants left today are the magnificent and ancient Angkor Wat temples built starting in the ninth century C.E. throughout the empire's former lands. More recently, twenty years of bloody civil war and general erosion by the infamous Khmer Rouge Army has subsided with the death of their leader Pol Pot who killed over two million Cambodians in an attempt to establish a Maoist state. The capital of Phnom Penh retains much influence from the days as a French colony and is a wonder to see. However, it is recommended that travelers notify their embassy before they travel in Cambodia and restrict themselves to the capital city as excursions into the jungles are still a suicidal venture. A high proportion of international criminals wanted by the United Nations, United States and Interpol call Cambodia's jungles home.

CHINA

Size: 9,600,000 sq. mi. (mainland)

Population: 1.5 billion (mainland)

Major Cities: Beijing (Capital, 12.6 million), Shanghai, Xi'an, Macau, Nanjing

Languages: Mandarin, Cantonese

Religions: State Atheism

Government: Communist

A country with over one billion citizens, China is proudly the cradle of Asian civilization. Great cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, though somewhat diminished with the country's change to communism, still manage to flourish with the infusion of controlled capitalism in the last decade. The fastest economically growing nation in the world, the day may be soon that every Chinese has a television and telephone in their homes. The West is justified in being concerned what another decade of rapid growth in China might spell for their supremacy in the world. With the sheer numbers of people and the expanse of country available, from stifling packed cities to desolate unreachable plateaus, it is not surprising that many great religions sprang forth from this land. Though atheism is the official religion of modern China, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam and Taoism are practiced in a low key manner in China. Note that visitors must obtain a travel visa at a Chinese embassy prior to arrival in the country; it is valid for only one month.

China is the cradle of more than human civilization: a great many Mythos secrets lie hidden within the confines of the meandering Great Wall of China.

The Plateau of Leng is believed to exist in Xinjiang Province, or even Burma. And on that plateau is the center of influence of the Tcho-Tcho peoples, who were once believed to have been completely exterminated by the Japanese during various invasions of the mainland. (This may have even been a systematic genocide on the part of the Dragon Lords.) The Tcho-Tcho High Priest Not to Be Described/Elder Hierophant is the Tcho-Tcho's Lama of Leng (which may actually be the Emerald Lama) who resides within an abandoned monastery within the Dreamlands. The gyaa-yothhn Vaults of Zin are also rumored to be located in the vicinity of Leng.

The city of Yian, home of Oriental sorcerers, the Kuen-Yuin, and possibly the center of a Chinese Cthulhu cult, also exists somewhere in the borders of China.

The Great Old Ones also make their presence felt in the Middle Kingdom: Hastur is known by the name of Kaiwan; Nyarlathotep, with his Avatar, the Bloated Woman; and the Outer God Yidhra with her Avatar Madame Yi. In addition, a cult to Ghatanothoa continues to exist in China as well.

Several copies of the *R'Lyeh Text* have been smuggled out of the country in recent years. The *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan* are also believed to have originated in China.

Hong Kong

Size: 416 sq. mi.

Population: 7 million

Languages: Cantonese, English

Religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism

Government: Special Administrative Region of China

With a population of over six million people, this, the third wealthiest center of commerce in Asia and center of the Chinese stock markets, is considered the New York of Asia; bustling and noisy, the city has much the same energy. Cantonese and English are spoken at this former British colony, though for the average Hong Kong resident, little has changed with the transfer to Chinese rule.

Much British influence still holds sway here, especially underground dealings with several secret societies moving to Hong Kong to drop out of the spotlight. The warlords of the Chinese triads also sit in open disguise here as captains of industry for a new China.

INDIA

Size: 1,230,000 sq. mi.

Population: 1 billion

Major Cities: New Delhi (Capital), Calcutta, Bombay

Languages: Hindi and English

Religions: Hindu 4/5, Buddhism, Muslim, Jainism

Government: Republic

A cradle of civilization since before 2,600 B.C.E., India is many things; few people can come away from the birthplace of several major world religions, including Buddhism, Hinduism and Janism untouched nor is it hard to understand why devout spiritualism should spring forth from this eclectic land of extremes. Whether it's the press of humanity

in New Delhi at the airport, the exquisite beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra, or the bloody steps of Kali Temple at the "City of Joy" in Calcutta, little can prepare a traveler for the number of unexpected sights and surprises India promises. In addition to delicate issues such as overcrowding and starvation, India has the added problem of tension with its neighbor Pakistan; formerly part of India until after WWII when "the Partition" created the Muslim country, forcing migration of over 10 million Hindus and Muslims on both borders and resulting in over 200,000 deaths. The threat of war over the disputed city of Kashmir on the border has escalated with the development of long range missiles and subsequently both countries shoving their way into the exclusive nuclear club. Travelers near the eastern border venture at their own risk. A threat perhaps more mundane,but no less dangerous, is the highly polluted air and water in most major cities as well as the continuing risk of contracting over two dozen major diseases while in India.

Of interest to Japanese scholars is that Buddhism swept through India around 500 B.C.E., radically changing the nature of Hindu beliefs. By 300 B.C.E. Buddhist Emperor Ashoka and his dynasty ruled most of India until around 40 C.E. when Hinduism regained popularity and remains the dominant religion in India today. Despite this decline in India, Emperor Ashoka and wandering Indian priests along the Silk Road can be attributed to Buddhism's spread to China and the rest of Asia.

The resemblance of the Great Old One Chaugnar Faugn to the Hindu deity Ghanesh is unmistakable and the influence that this being once held in India should not be underestimated. Nor should it be forgotten that the Greater Brothers of Chaugnar Faugn, staying behind, still dwell in India. It would seem that Nyarlathotep is also extremely busy in India with several avatars at work in the land including the Small Crawler and the Wailing Writher, the second of which is known in Hindu myths as Narhari. There are a great many other Mythos influences in this ancient place; where the keeper chooses to delve is up to them.

KOREA, North

Size: 47,000 sq. mi.

Population: 24 million

Major Cities: Pyongyang (Capital)

Languages: Korean

Religions: Forbidden

Government: Dictatorial Communism

North Korea is half of a country, split in two with the rise of the communist state in Asia. Conditions are exceedingly harsh, as drought has brought starvation to a populace of twenty-four million. Attempts at relief aid have proven unsuccessful as food is diverted to North Korean soldiers. In the capital of Pyongyang, there are rumors of rampant cannibalism in the countryside. Religion is still forbidden in this volatile and unpredictable military dictatorship. More troubling is the development of intercontinental ballistic missile technology and possible nuclear warheads able to reach the West Coast of the United States.

The endemic cannibalism and lockdown on the flow of information into and out of the country may conceal a much more sinister Mythos influence, the worship of the dark god Mordiggian.

KOREA, South

Size: 45,000 sq. mi.

Population: 451 million

Major Cities: Seoul (Capital, 12 million)

Languages: Korean

Religions: Buddhist, Confucian, Ancestor Worship

Government: Republic

Guarded on the northern border by one of the oldest demilitarized zones, the DMZ, South Korea keeps an uneasy peace with its communist neighbor. Despite aid and the sad knowledge that many South Korean families have starving relatives across the border, little can be done although overtures of re-unification have been made in the past. The capital of Seoul acts as a major hub for international air travel in Asia. One of the closest neighbors to Japan, a ferry boat service from the port city of Pusan goes to Japan's cities of Osaka and Kobe offering cheap travel for sightseeing.

LAOS

Size: 90,000 sq. mi.

Population: 4.5 million

Major Cities: Vientiane (capital, 300,000)

Languages: Lao and French

Religions: Buddhist 4/5, animist and spirit cults

Government: Socialist republic

Isolated from the outside world after decades of French colonization and civil war, the country is underdeveloped and almost uninhabited. Besides a nearly untainted east Asian culture, another attraction is the assortment of ancient Wat temples littering the countryside. One of the most mysterious places in Laos is the Plain of Jars where clay jars of unknown origin weighing up to six tons litter the plain in the thousands. Also of note in Laos is a portion of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Though Laos is only now readmitting travelers, rebel factions have begun an intense bombing campaign which, combined with thuggery outside of the main city, still makes tourism a dangerous proposition. The lure of easy access to opium has attracted some foreigners, though many have paid the price with their lives.

A cult to Yidhra is said to operate in Laos, possibly connected to the opium trade in some way.

MALAYSIA

Size: 200,000 sq. mi.

Population: 23 million

Major Cities: Kuala Lumpur (Capital)

Languages: Bahasa, English and Chinese

Religions: Muslim 2/4, Buddhist 1/4

Government: Parliamentary Monarchy

Malaysia is second only to Thailand in ease of travel for the traveler despite occasional tensions between the ethnic populations of Muslim Malay who control politics and Buddhist/Taoist Chinese who control the business world. Its capital of Kuala Lumpur is a major draw with ultramodern high-rises mixing with more traditional flair. Most renowned in the West is the city's twin Petronas Towers, currently the tallest buildings in the world (as seen in James Bond movies). Malaysia is mostly tropical rain forest. The country contains a sizable peninsula while the eastern region of the country includes Borneo. During WWII, the Japanese took Malaysia from the British in a bid for colonialism. Much like other Asian countries, a resistance movement

sprang up, in this case communist, but did not achieve independence until after the war when it reverted again to British rule.

The humid climes of Malaysia and the presence of human habitation for 12,000 years has encouraged colonization by Mythos entities as well as invading armies. A sizable population of Tcho-Tchu peoples hides in the jungles, while Nyarlathotep's avatar Shugoron and the lesser servitor race, the children of Shugoron, wield influence in Malaysian rural regions.

MONGOLIA

Size: 600,000 sq. mi.

Population: 2.5 million

Major Cities: Ulaan Baatar (Capital)

Languages: Mongolian, Turkic, Russian, Chinese

Religions: Tibetan Buddhism, Muslim, Shamanism

Government: Communist

With alien vistas almost from another bygone era, seemingly endless steppes and the vast stretches of the Gobi Desert, Mongolia hardly seems a hospitable place to live. But evidence suggests that Mongolia has seen human habitation for over 500,000 years and the nomadic tribes of the steppes have managed to call this place home in the 21st century. Its shifting sands at one time gave birth to one of the most famous and shrewd warlords in history, Temujin, also known as Genghis Khan, who swept down on fast steeds from the blowing wastes to conquer most of China. Later his grandson, Kublai Khan, took most of Europe. Fate has a cruel sense of humor as the barely independent country of Modern Mongolia finds itself boxed in between giants Russia and China. Though communist, the Mongols are a deeply religious people with ties to Tibet going back to pre-history: Traditionally each Mongol was expected to journey to the Tibetan holy city of Lhasa and in return they acted as warriors and protectors for the Tibetans. The capital of Ulaan Baatar is full of old Soviet cars and many buildings are of drab Soviet make, though this city is slowly catching up with the modern world. Note that an entry and exit visa are required before entering the country and often requires sponsorship of some sort, by a friend or a travel company. In addition to this, travelers are required to register with the police upon arrival.

NEPAL

Size: 140,000 sq. mi.

Population: 24 million

Major Cities: Kathmandu (Capital, 500,000), Pokhara

Languages: Nepali, Hindi, Chinese, Tibetan

Religions: Hindu 4/5, Buddhism, Muslim

Government: Parliamentary Democracy

Nestled between the sea level Indian Ganges Jungle on the south and the highest mountains in the world on the north, the Tibetan Himalayas, Nepal is a small country containing some of the most geographically extreme regions on Earth. In recent years, Nepal has become an increasingly popular tourist destination. With Mount Everest and Annapurna as well as many other of the highest peaks in the world, extreme sports fanatics flock to this increasingly Westernized Nepal.

Landlocked near so many countries, Nepal's ethnic diversity is impressive, added to during the Chinese invasion of Tibet in the 1950s when thousands of Tibetan refugees fled through the harsh Himalayas to establish enclaves in Nepal. One such enclave is Bodhnath in Kathmandu, around Nepal's tallest Buddhist stupa, which is encircled by numerous Tibetan monasteries. Another is Lumbini, the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, where a large population of Tibetans pray at the Bodhi tree where the Buddha was supposedly born. It is of interest that the world famous knife wielding troops, the ghurkas employed by the numerous foreign armies, originate from Nepal.

PHILIPPINES

Size: 110,000 sq. mi.

Population: 65 million

Major Cities: Manila (Capital, 10 million)

Languages: Tagalog and English

Religions: Roman Catholic 4/5, Protestant, Muslim

Government: Republic

A country composed of over 7,000 islands served by numerous ferry services, the Philippines today is a relatively safe and cheap destination for the traveller. The Philippines have been occupied for over 300,000 years, the recent wave of immigration being of Malayan extraction followed by Spanish colonization in the 16th century. The islands were purchased in the 19th century by the United States with a slow climb to independence. During WWII, Japan annexed the Philippines, but following the war the islands gained full autonomy. It is of note that the Philippines is the only Christian country in Asia.

SINGAPORE

Size: 250 sq. mi.

Population: 3 million

Languages: Mandarin, Malay, Tamil, and English

Religions: Taoist 1/3, Buddhist 1/3, Muslim

Government: Parliamentary Democracy

Once a seedy colony of Britain rife with opium dens and rickshaws, independent Singapore today is a modern sculpture of glass and steel. The transition into the modern world hasn't stanched the locals' superstitious nature, however; streets are littered with fortune tellers and temples abound. One of the largest holidays in Singapore is the Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, an effort to placate the restless dead with offerings of food and Chinese plays. Singapore was yet another country brutally invaded by Japan during WWII. Japan deftly defeated the country's British protectors, leading to the move toward independence after the war.

SRI LANKA

Size: 60,000 sq. mi.

Population: 20 million

Major Cities: Colombo (Capital, 2 million)

Languages: Sinhala, Tamil and English

Religions: Mostly Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim

Government: Democracy

With the close proximity to India, Sri Lanka is a deeply religious country but at the same time strife ridden with ethnic unrest. The northern part of the country is extremely hazardous, filled as it is with terrorist groups like the Tamil Tigers who are trying to retake the Jaffna peninsula after the country declared Buddhism its official religion. The capital city of Colombo is also a dangerous venture; avoiding crowds is a good idea as suicide bombers are more frequent lately.

Perhaps the insanity upon the island can be attributed to proximity to the Island of Ponape, where the deep underwater trench there contains the entity Ubb. Yuggs are also in abundance in the surrounding

waters. The Great Old One Zorh-Ommog also lurks in the vicinity of Sri Lanka.

Taiwan

Size: 14,000 sq. mi.

Population: 22 million

Major Cities: Taipei (Capital, 2.6 million)

Languages: Taiwanese, Mandarin Chinese

Religions: Buddhism, Taoism

Government: Democratic Progressive Party (considered a part of China by the mainland)

Representing the last holdout to the "one China" slogan of the communist mainland, Taiwan openly embraces capitalism like its reabsorbed sister, Hong Kong. The capital city of Taipei is a thriving center of trade and wealth in Asia. Taiwanese still practice pre-Maoist regime ancestor worship, Taoism and Buddhism which Mao cleansed with most religious beliefs from Mainland China. Taiwan was devastated by a major earthquake in 1999, as well as the fall from power of the Democratic Progressive Party, who for over fifty years touted the slogan of an independent Taiwan. This could spell a troubled future for this small island and its looming neighbor.

THAILAND

Size: 300,000 sq. mi.

Population: 60 million

Major Cities: Bangkok (Capital, 6 million)

Languages: Thai

Religions: Predominantly Buddhist

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

A repository of ancient temples, ruined cities hidden within lush tropical jungles and pure white beaches make this a hot-spot for modern tourism from around the world. Formerly known as Siam, it was invaded and held by the Japanese during WWII and afterward suffered thirty years of military dictatorships. Only in the last two decades has democracy been instituted. The crowded supercity of Bangkok is a riot of chaos and color with magnificent golden Wat temples shoulder to shoulder with modern skyscrapers. Of all the former Indochina countries, Thailand is the cheapest, safest and most pleasant. This can be attributed to the fierce drive of the people to remain independent. However, the Laos and Cambodia borders are highly dangerous areas to linger in. Note there are numerous scams by drug dealers to recruit travelers with free travel: possession of drugs in Thailand is punishable by death.

TIBET

Size: 2,300,000 sq. mi.

Population: 4.5 million

Major Cities: Lhasa (Capital, 1 million)

Languages: Tibetan and Chinese dialects

Religions: Tibetan Buddhist, Muslim

Government: Province of China

For most Westerners, Tibet is synonymous with the exotic imagery of Shangri-La or Shamballah, and commonly confused with these mythical destinations. It is, however, easy to see why, as the rooftop of the world, Tibet, has an indefinable mystical quality to the land. For centuries Tibet was a nation exercising self isolation. With the invasion of China in the 1950s, the deaths of 1.2 million Tibetans, the destruction of over 6000 monasteries, the absorption of over 100,000 Tibetans into labor camps and the Dalai Lama being forced to flee the country, it became totally closed to the world. It is coming to light that further atrocities have been inflicted upon the people as 100,000 Han Chinese have migrated to Tibet, nuclear waste has been dumped on the plateau and the country has been totally deforested in only thirty years. It wasn't until the late 1980s that Tibet was open again to travelers but with near impossible costs and travel restrictions. Direct flights to Lhasa are forbidden, often requiring flight through mainland China for a thorough fleecing before arrival in Tibet. For the spiritual seeker there is much to see in Tibet; most notable is the Potala Fortress, the former government building and burial site of generations of Dalai Lamas. A spiritual challenge of another kind in Tibet is Mount Everest.

The Plateau of Tsang is said to reside in Tibet, accompanied by a large population of Tcho-Tcho peoples and their predecessors, the Miri Nigri. Perhaps the systematic destruction of the culture of Tibet is a search for the Plateaus of Leng and Tsang by the Chinese.

VIETNAM

Size: 130,000 sq. mi.

Population: 80 million

Major Cities: Hanoi (Capital, 1 million), Saigon

Languages: Vietnamese, French and English

Religions: Mostly Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian

Government: Communist

Having in the last decade recovered from several devastating wars, tourism and unrestricted trade have served as major boons to the country's economy in recent years. It doesn't hurt that Vietnam is awash in untamed beauty despite years of depredations by the armies of the Khmer Rouge, North and South Vietnam, France, and the United States. Fortunately, Ho Chi Minh City remains a busy center of Vietnamese culture and may be heart of the next Asian economic dragon in the coming century. ☯

APPENDIX FOUR:
UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO
東京大学

A clearing house for potentially vital Mythos data is presented.

Wisdom and Folly

Wisdom is not found in a book. This is the fatal flaw many alchemists make. Wisdom is in experience. Wisdom is in folly. Wisdom is in the flow of Life. Surviving and being in balance with the cosmos is the truest Tao. The folly is seeking wisdom from others rather than inside yourself. This is the greatest wisdom of the Tao. Find this, and you will be on the first step of the Ivory Stair.

—Chin Liao, *The Tao of Immortality: Analects of the Void.*

Welcome to the University of Tokyo. Affectionately called "Todai" by faculty and students, this is an institution rich in cultural significance to the Japanese. The university has been on this site in Tokyo in one form or another since the seventeenth century, serving as a fertile garden for the nation's most elite future leaders in every field. As was the case two centuries ago, many of Todai's graduates go on to highly prominent positions in government and private industry. Whether you are just a visitor or plan to join our esteemed establishment, we hope your stay at Todai is fruitful.

History

In the Edo Period (1600–1868), the concept of education for the masses was slowly gaining acceptance. In the beginning of this era, nobles and samurai would hire Buddhist priests to privately tutor their children in the Chinese classics. Toward the end of the period, daimyō, regional rulers, established Confucian centers of learning to train their retainers in legal problems, moral issues, and historical models of administration. By the end of the Edo Period, the national literacy rate was 40% and two hundred such institutions existed. Todai, in this earlier form, served as the emperor's primary Confucian school and one of the six centers for national studies (*koku-gaku*). Todai survived the purge of the Meiji Restoration, when many other long-standing traditional institutions of learning were dismantled, because of its long affiliation with the emperor.

In 1877, the Meiji Restoration officially established the University of Tokyo as a national institution of learning, along with other sweeping reforms to modernize the country. At this time, old modes of education such as Confucian scholarship and national studies were discarded in favor of long-tested Western models of education, such as Oxford University in England and Harvard in America.

In line with the policy of modernization, many foreign scholars were invited to study and teach at Japanese universities. A proud academic tradition follows to this day: Todai boasts several Nobel laureates on its faculty at any one time, teaching and doing research. In turn, Todai is one of the most desired schools for entry by students seeking undergraduate education. Of all the universities presently in Japan, the University of Tokyo can rightly claim the longest history and finest academic tradition in the nation.

Todai is one of six well-known and historic universities in Tokyo on par with the Ivy League in the United States. Known as *Tokyo Roku Daigaku*, the group includes the University of Tokyo, Waseda University, Keio University, Meiji University, Hosei University and Rikkyo University. Sport meets among the schools are common.

Academic Year and Holidays

Academic Year Begins	April 1
Spring Vacation	April 1–April 7
Classes Begin (Summer Term)	Early April
Anniversary of the University	April 12
Summer Vacation	July 11–Sept. 10
Classes Begin (Winter Term)	Early October
Winter Vacation	December 15–Jan. 7
Commencement Ceremony	March 20
Academic Year Ends	March 31

School Colors

Todai's school color is light blue. The story behind this is that the university had no official color for many years. At a rowing meet against the University of Kyoto the color was decided by drawing random lots. Todai drew light blue and Kyoto drew dark blue. Light blue has been Todai's official color since.

Club Activities and "Circles"

The nature of the education system in Japan makes gaining entry into higher education a vicious and stressful endeavor. Rather than merely high marks, the decisive factor in the acceptance of many to Todai is the relative prestige of the high school from which the applicant graduated.

Competition for entry into premier universities is steep; ambitious parents even jockey to place their children in elite kindergartens. This tends to ensure that the student is accepted into a highly ranked elementary school, junior high, and in turn high school, usually guaranteeing entrance into the right university.

Once accepted after twelve intense, pressure-cooker years of striving to succeed, the last thing a new university student wants to do is study more. Foregoing the social life Western students enjoy in their high school years, Japanese students play social catch-up during university, sometimes making leisure activities their only goal while in university.

For this reason, university clubs, called "circles" in Japanese, are popular among the student body. Almost every student is involved in at least one circle, sometimes many more. Often, the activity the circle is supposed to represent is only a small part of the things the circle provides for the new student. Circles supply the new student with a peer support group, instant friends, activities, and a social scene. Relationships in most circles become very tight and last throughout the four-year university stay. Sports are highly popular circle activities. Todai has forty-two such sports clubs, some formed over one hundred years ago. While competition for bragging rights on the field is intense, after a meet the students are free to enjoy the company of friends. Tennis, golf, soccer and badminton are popular pursuits.

Circles that do not fall under the umbrella of sports are considered cultural clubs. Cultural circles cover a diverse range of interests, from environmental concerns to Japanese animation.

There can be a dark side to involvement with circles. Given the natural tendency for group-think by Japanese, and the closed nature and intense camaraderie within circles, unsavory social behavior sometimes develops. Some circles are recruitment centers for cults. Others take advantage of the insulation from outside society to engage in debased acts. Students should take care not to join a thinly disguised cultist group.

Organization and Departments

The University of Tokyo is highly decentralized. Each faculty and graduate school has separate administration. Presently, Todai has ten undergraduate faculties, ten graduate schools, eleven specialized research facilities, and various research facilities such as botanical gardens, livestock farms, experimental farms and forests, laboratories, and observatories.

The University of Tokyo is a monolithic institution where it is easy for a person or thing to be lost in the morass of bureaucracy and gears of administration. Gaining funding for a project can be difficult; however, once it is approved, a researcher can easily disappear into the woodwork and do uninterrupted study in private. Several cults are able to use the excellent research facilities of Todai by bribing or controlling professors.

Undergraduate Faculties and Departments

There are ten undergraduate faculties, each of which is further divided into departments: agriculture, arts and sciences, economics, education, engineering, law, letters, medicine, pharmaceuticals, and science.

TODAI CLOCK TOWER AND MURAKAMI HALL

Graduate Schools and Departments

There are ten graduate schools, each of which is further divided into departments: agriculture and life sciences, arts and sciences, economics, education, engineering, humanities and sociology, law and politics, mathematical sciences, medical sciences, and pharmaceutical sciences.

Institutes of Interest to Researchers

Institute of Medical Science, Earthquake Research Institute, Institute of Oriental Culture, Institute of Social Science, Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies, Institute of Industrial Science, Historiographical Institute, Institute of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences, Institute for Cosmic Ray Research, Institute for Solid-State Physics, Ocean Research Institute.

Visiting Scholars

Foreign scholars and students wishing to utilize the University of Tokyo's extensive faculties need not worry. In addition to the International Office, many faculties offer resources and staff to help.

The requirements for general admission are the same as those required of native students. Application should be done about six months in advance of the desired start time as the National Immigration Bureau needs time to process entry papers.

Todai Tuition Expenses

Foreign students must pay the following before entering the university. Application fee, admission tuition, and monthly or yearly tuition all must be paid.

Service	Yen
General Application Fee	9,800
for Undergraduate Degree Candidate—	
Admission Tuition	17,000
Regular Tuition:	
Per month	47,000
Per year	469,200
for Master's Degree & Postgrad Doctoral Candidate—	
Per sem.	30,000
For a year	447,600

International Scholarships

Japanese government and private scholarships are available. Students receiving government scholarships are known as Monbusho scholars *(Kokuhi-ryugakusei)*.

Housing for International Students

The university provides lodging for researchers and students at the Todai International Lodges and Mitaka International Students Hall. Space is limited. Most foreign students live in dorms, apartments, or engage in home-stays.

Points of Interest

Hakuinsha Pavilion

Built from the finest wood of the university's own experimental forest, the pavilion is a structure based on old Edo-style Japanese architecture. Specifically designed for the performance of various kinds of traditional cultural arts, it is composed of two rooms that are ten tatami mats in size. A reception room in the back has a sunken hearth that is ideal for the tea ceremony. The straw tatami mats can be removed so the pavilion is usable as a rehearsal stage for traditional performing arts such as nô, kabuki, and bunraku plays.

Some student circles that practice Kotodama or other darker arts have been known to sneak into the pavilion to invoke traditional magic rites. This building is also used in bizarre hazing rituals involving nô masks by circles wishing to scare new members.

Murakami Auditorium

Funded before WWII by Mr. Zenjiro Murakami from the Yotsubishi Zaibatsu financial group, the auditorium is a symbol of the university. It was here that students in the 1960s camped out in protest to university policies. Police expelled them with water cannons on national television, making Murakami Auditorium even more renowned. Today the building is used for graduations and lectures.

An old campus rumor goes that when the Allies occupied Japan and began to break up the zaibatsu conglomerates, an associate of Mr. Murakami, fearful of being implicated for war crimes, hid potentially damning documents somewhere within the newly constructed

auditorium. Occupation forces gave halfhearted search but had other more serious matters to attend to.

Gotenshita Memorial Arena

Built on the hundredth anniversary of Todai, this facility features a gymnasium, swimming pool, training room, and sports counseling room as well as a barbershop and beauty parlor. Students with proper IDs may use the sports facilities by purchasing a six-month or one year pass. The following activities are offered in the gymnasium: volleyball, basketball, ping-pong, badminton, and wall climbing. Wall climbing requires special permission. The meeting room offers aerobic dance, tai chi chuan, and stretching. The training room offers various exercise machines for patrons.

Akamon (Red Gate)

The daimyô of Shikoku's Iyo Province erected this important cultural property. Originally the entrance to his Edo home, the red painted gate is now a distinctive landmark of the Todai campus.

The daimyô was a dabbler in the magic arts. Using the proper spells, Akamon can serve as a conduit to other places. On a new moon, the gate opens to Yomi from 2 to 4 A.M., the hours when the veil between Yomi and Earth is the weakest. Hitoike rarely wander through, as a warding spell forbids exit. But entrance into Yomi is a different matter. Over the decades, there have been several mysterious student disappearances but no connection has been made to Akamon.

Sanshiro Ike Pond

Near Ikutokuen Garden, this pond is shaped like the kanji character *kokoro*, heart, and originally belonged to the Yamada family from Tosa. It gained its current name from the book *Sanshiro*, by famous novelist Natsume Soseki who was a professor at Todai. Soseki often frequented the pond for quiet reflection.

Gingko-lined Walk

Majestic gingko trees line this walkway, leading from the main gate of the Todai campus to Marujamai Auditorium. While ginkgo trees are pleasant to view all year round, they are especially magnificent in Autumn when the leaves turn a golden yellow and the pollen gives out a strong but pleasing smell. Cooking and relaxing under the trees is a favorite pastime of students. Considering the role ginkgo trees play in university life, it's not surprising that Todai has adopted the gingko leaf into the design of university flags and badges.

International Office

For visiting foreign students and faculty, this office provides information on living arrangements, home-stays, scholarships, as well as other matters for international students.

This is a good place to start when sending new foreign investigators to Todai.

The College Art Museum

Located in the old section of the main library, this museum features an eclectic array of works. Since its opening in the 1950s with oriental art and archaeological artifacts from Japan, Korea, and China, it has constantly added new pieces. Works by modern Japanese painters and even items from remote places such as the Andes fill the walls of the museum. Presently, many of the exhibits consist of contemporary art. Open to the public, it hosts special exhibitions twice a year by famous contemporary artists and is a favorite location for leading scholars, artists, designers, writers, and critics to give lectures.

The Pipe Organ

Donated in 1976, overseas and local performers hold recitals that are open to the general public and free of charge. (This is not shown on the map on page 336.)

Buildings 1–16

These buildings contain assorted classrooms and administrative offices.

Research Facilities

University Library System (ULS)

The library facilities of Todai are extensive: just under one million books, periodicals and other items are filed into the University Library System. About a quarter of these are available to students and the public while the rest are distributed among thirty libraries of various departments. Special collections also grace the library, including the complete works of an Edo Era Confucian school. The largest special collections are attached to the research library and the science library. Chances are that a determined researcher can find information on almost any topic under the sun at Todai's stacks.

Research Library

Open to faculty and graduate students, this library has about 200,000 works in its open stacks. Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of its users, the library's holdings cover an unusual array of topics. The library features contemporary titles as well as the scholarly collections of respected historical figures and men of learning. One unusual collection includes Japanese and Chinese books on medicinal herbs and Eastern medicine inherited from the Institute of Resource Science.

Much of Tokyo University's occult catalog is hidden in plain sight upon the shelves of this building, tucked in between other carefully preserved books and scrolls of Japan's literary heritage.

The Science Library

Filling the research needs of students and faculty, this library offers materials on natural sciences and multidisciplinary topics. This collection also contains works from noted visiting scholars and doctors who came to Todai at the turn of the twentieth century.

Yonezawa Laboratory

The Yonezawa Lab is the pride and joy of the College of Science. Barring corporate-owned labs, Yonezawa Lab is one of the best institutional research facilities in Japan. Research includes high-tech composite textiles, AI and parallel computing, and structural designs for disaster prevention in typhoons and earthquakes. Yonezawa is the home to several Nobel Laureate researchers.

Several chemists and scientists loyal to the cult Buddha's Tears use these facilities. Project Yûrei Psi-Mech Division also farms out minor and non-sensitive projects to Yonezawa labs.

Shared Facilities

The university offers a number of shared facilities open to the Todai scholars: University Museum, Cryogenic Center, Radioisotope Center, Research Center for Nuclear Science and Technology, Educational Computer Center, Environmental Science Center, Molecular Genetics Research Laboratory, International Center, Health Service Center, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology.

Prominent Faculty

Todai has a faculty of 2,700 professors, associate professors, and lecturers. Currently, around 1,400 foreign scholars visit the university for long-term sabbaticals or short seminars. About 27,000 students are enrolled at the university; of them, about 1,800 are foreign students from over seventy different countries.

Any researcher worth his or her salt will stay on the faculty of a university even if they are engaged in full time employment for a private research firm. The resources available at a university are invaluable. University faculty have access to fresh young scholars with innovative ideas who do research on demand just so they can be published in scholarly journals. A faculty position also provides myriad public sector contacts in government and academia that are invaluable in getting materials and grant funding as well as getting permits greased when something quasi-illegal is needed.

Here are some profiles of just a few notable researchers from the highly talented people at Todai.

Doctor DAISUKE Yamaguchi

The good doctor is a tenured researcher, a pioneer in the field of biochemistry. While he runs a privately funded lab, he takes occasional leaves of absence to work with associate professors and grad students at Todai's various research hospitals and at Yoneyama Labs. For more information, see pages 206 and 278–281.

Professor Mari Makoto

Once a leading researcher in the field of engineering for private firms, she now heads the Department of Parapsychology. Professor Makoto has integrated her previous knowledge into applying a trained scientific eye to the phenomenon of the unexplained. For more information, see pages 200 and 273.

Professor Taro Watanabe

While currently on an "extended sabbatical" pursuing personal projects, Prof. Watanabe is responsible for having organized the Department of Parapsychology into the modern fact-gathering facility it is today. At Todai, the department is one of the fastest growing in the last fifteen years. His extensive expertise in traditional religious beliefs has also led to the formation of an interdisciplinary field between Eastern religion and parapsychology. For more information, see pages 158 and 197.

About the Occult Collection

While Todai's listed occult collection seems quite extensive, possibly rivaling Miskatonic University's, the listed Mythos tomes (see page 339) are spread among a million books in the university library's open stacks and special collections. Several are also located at the shared facilities across the country.

Assuming an investigator knows what he or she is looking for, most tomes can be found using the library's efficient indexing system on the computer network and its CD-ROM file catalogs. Getting the tomes is another matter: desirable books are rarely where they should be, as Mythos researchers at Todai seldom place prized works back in their proper positions on the shelves. Since the special collections are often well guarded to prevent theft of valuable books from the shelves, one trick is to misplace the book in order to prevent others from accessing it.

Special collections feature thousands of fragile silk scrolls and crumbling woodblock prints that require special viewing permission by University Information Services. Such vouchers require from a week to a month or more to verify the applicant's credentials as well as the validity of the request. Naturally, well-placed donations or the proper clout can speed up this process. Especially valuable or rare works often require that a Todai associate professor or graduate student accompany the user to monitor the research done with the tome.

Building 8 Research Library

Concentrations of Mythos works at Todai can be found at Building 8 within the special collections of famous scholars. *The Tao of Immortality* is nestled within the Eastern Medicine collection. *Supernaturalia Japonica* and *Secret Mysteries of Asia* sit with the rest of Lafcadio Hearn's books and papers in the Department of Literature's special collection. *The Rock Garden on Infinity* also can be found there.

University Museum

The university museum contains most of the nonvolume Mythos material. It has shared facilities with the Japanese National Museum, which maintains a complex of buildings in central Tokyo's Ueno National Park containing many national treasures and historical artifacts, much like the Smithsonian in the United States.

The Wandering Path and *The Sixth Ring*, both illustrated works, are on open display behind bulletproof glass along with dozens of other ribald Ukiyo-E woodblock prints at Ueno. The mysterious metallic disks of the Misho-Tai are also open to public viewing at the

The Lonely Traveler

The Mystery of the Ainu

By Liz Tully

On Japan's northern-most island of Hokkaido, an important secret rests close to the breasts of the Ainu people. Ainu were the original nomadic occupants of the entire Japanese archipelago before they were driven progressively north by invaders of Asian stock, the Japanese, a people who appeared from literally nowhere around 3000 B.C.E. They displaced the indigenous Caucasoid culture. Now of diluted Caucasian stock from intermarrying, the Ainu have had no choice but to retreat against the ever-increasing crush of the interlopers. Today these native peoples are relegated to the frigid and desolate climes of unwanted tundra lands in Hokkaido. Here long before the more populous settlers, the Ainu know the land better than any, and they still listen to old truths the winds whisper. Due to their treatment and marginalization over the centuries, they are understandably reluctant to offer advice or aid to any outsider. What ancient secrets do they protect and why do Ainu shamans and Japanese mediums alike declare the issue guarded from even paranormal probing?

University of Tokyo's Occult Catalog: Mythos Tomes

NAME OF TOME	LANGUAGE/ DATE	AUTHOR	SAN LOSS	C.M.*	WKS.	COMMENTS
Black Arts: Craft of Kotodama	Kobû Japanese/ 10th c. C.E.	Anonymous	1D4+2/1D8	+6	24	Sacred orthography
Black Sutra	Burmese/c. 700 C.E.	U Pao	1D4/1D8	+5	18	Severe water damage
Book of Eibon (variant)	Chinese/7th cent. C.E.	Master Hisao	1D4/2D4	+13	36	Scrolls, older than Latin copies
Dhol Chants	Burmese/unknown 11th cent. C.E.	Unknown	1D6/2D6	+10	62	Carved ivory w/ gold inlay
Doctrine of Buddha's Tears	Japanese/1987 C.E.	Asahara Shinyama	1D2/1D4+1	+3	4	Buddhist chant book
Forbidden Sutra/ Samsara Sutra Siddhartha	Sanskrit/ 3rd c. C.E.	Forbidden Brotherhood	1D4/1D6	+6	24	Buddhist philosophy, stone tablets, partial copy
R'lyeh Text	Chinese/c. 300 B.C.E.	Unknown	1D4/1D6	+5	22	Partial copy, two clay tablets
Rock Garden on Infinity	Japanese/1942 C.E.	Shintaro Ikeda	1D3/1D6	+4	4	Mythos haiku
Scroll of the Hells/ Jigoku Zoshi	Kobû Japanese/ 11th cent. C.E.	Joken	1D6/1D10	+9	36	Encrypted painted scrolls
Secret Mysteries of Asia	German, 1847 C.E.	G. Mölder	1D3/1D6	+5	12	Several chapters torn, missing
Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan	Chinese/ 2nd cent. C.E.	Hsan the Greater	1D4/1D8	+8	40	Seven scrolls, gold case
Shinwa Taizen/Book of Myth (Shinwa to Densha no Nippon)	Japanese/16th c. C.E.	Kanei Mushi no Hara	1D8/2D6	+11	38	Folio woodblock
Six Ring Law/ Roku Rin Po	Japanese/1720 C.E.	Musashi Miyamoto	1/1D4	+1	8	Martial arts guide
Supernaturalia Japonica	English/1910 C.E.	Lafcadio Hearn	1D8/1D10	+10	41	Occult encyclopedia
Tao of Immortality/ Fumetsu no Dôkyô	Heian Japanese/ 10th cent. C.E.	Unknown	1D3/1D6	+5	32	Alchemical manual
Tao of Immortality/ Tao te Shênsiân	Mandarin Chinese/ 5th cent. C.E.	Chin Lun	1D6/1D8+1	+8	28	Alchemical manual
Wandering Path/ Magatta Michi	Japanese/1600 C.E.	Anonymous	1D4/1D8	+7	30	Encrypted fable
Zanthu Tablets	English/1916 C.E.	H.H. Copeland	1D3/1D6	+3	8	Printed brochure

*C.M.—Cthulhu Mythos percentiles.

University of Tokyo's Occult Catalog: Objects D'Art

NAME OF WORK	LANGUAGE/ DATE	CREATOR	SAN LOSS	CTHULHU MYTHOS	COMMENTS
Misho-Tai	Mu'vian, c. 50,000 B.C.E.	Unknown	1D8/2D6+1	+16	Original *Shinwa Taizen*, holographic text
Monolith of Okinawa	Nacal.?	Unknown	1D4/1D6	+5	Partial *Shinwa Taizen* and Mu'vian history
Shuh of Tankan	7th century C.E.	Tankan	5D3	+1	Petrified flute; performs spell effect: Summon Servitor of Outer God
Sojobo's Shamisen	7th century C.E.	Tengu Sojobo	0/1D3	0	String instrument: performs spell effect: Contact Tengu

museum. The Monolith of Okinawa sits as an imposing centerpiece at the National Museum of History in Ueno Park. Sojobo's Shamisen can be found at the Tokyo Museum of Antiquities in Ueno Park.

Imperial Treasures of Manchuria

A handful of valuable non-Japanese Mythos texts sit locked away within a storage room at the university museum. These and other treasures have been kept from researchers because of political in-fighting, both about the nature of the majority of the collections and the way these treasures were obtained. Much of this hoard is millennia old, the riches of generations of Chinese emperors. In 1930–32, Chinese troops removed the treasures from the imperial palaces and hid them to protect against looting. During the conquest of Manchuria, the Japanese Army came upon the hoard in a nondescript warehouse. Japanese officers plundered a little of it, but most of the treasures were catalogued and taken as spoils of war to the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

After the war, the embarrassment of its surreptitious acquisition (and the reluctance of Japanese officials to let go of this priceless treasure) kept the hoard hidden for more than fifty years. Today, some items have been put on discreet display in Japanese museums—but hundreds, perhaps thousands, of magnificent works still rest in packing crates. Researchers who know of the collection press for access to this precious find but are frustrated by the red tape of the university administration.

Items of Mythos interest include the *R'Lyeh Text*, the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*, and a rare variant of the *Book of Eibon*, all in classical Chinese. Two works in Burmese also remain hidden among the gold thrones and ivory statues packed in crates, the *Black Scripts* and the *Dhol Chants*. A partial copy of *Samsara Sutra Siddhartha* etched on stone tablets is also stored here, and the Shoh of Tankan is locked in the same warehouse as the priceless treasures of the Chinese Emperors.

Other Locations

The *Jigoku Zoshi* can be found in the libraries of the Department of Eastern Religions. The *Shinsen Jikizen* is within a special collection of Neo-Confucian texts in Kyoto.

Archeology Department

Destroy a country, but its mountains and rivers remain.

The archeology department at Todai is quite large. Most of the resources of the department are used surveying construction sites across the nation where artifacts are often discovered. These accidental finds are usually Yayoi-era pottery and kofun mounds. Artifacts are catalogued and dutifully removed from the site so yet another building can fill the skyline.

Facilities

Todai's archeology department utilizes modern labs to carbon-date, spectrograph, and restore artifacts with all manner of chemical treatments and TLC by graduate students. After careful restoration, finds are displayed in one of the thousands of excellent museums across Japan.

The Hokkaido Kofun Dig

On the cold and frozen wastes of the northernmost island of the Japanese archipelago, an unusual kofun was recently discovered by a farmer hoping to clear land for cattle grazing. Todai researchers were called in to check for any artifacts of value. The team found a perfectly key-shaped kofun mound containing an unopened burial chamber. Using exploratory cameras with fiber optic probes, scientists found a perfectly preserved and undisturbed outer burial chamber graced with amazing paintings of star charts and mythological creatures on the stone ceilings. This find gained national media attention. Upon careful opening of the outer chamber, numerous burial artifacts were found.

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

REMNANTS OF A LOST CONTINENT?

An ancient race of divine origins?

By Gary Carob

Recently, an incredibly ancient and mysterious monolithic city of unimaginable proportions was discovered submerged off the shores of the Okinawan Islands. Found in late 2000, modern Japanese scientists squabble over the possibility of such bizarre, almost non-Euclidean, massive basalt stone structures being naturally formed. A handful of adherents to the traditional historical record tremble at the thought of their cozy theories being disturbed—much like the earthquake at the site that led to the ruins' discovery.

Why has the Japanese government downplayed this amazing find and quashed any official stories in the national press? Are the wild rumors of these ruins possibly being remnants of the mythic Japanese homeland of Mu,' the birthplace of emperors, founded?

Traditional scientists are hard-pressed to come up with plausible explanations. One small group of scholars seems to believe there is validity in the legend of Mu and seeks to prove this hypothesis against a stoic wall of doubting peers. In addition, recent months have seen a great deal of activity by dozens of private interests. The mystery of what might be at the Okinawan ruin site seems to have spread treasure-hunting fever. The question on the lips of informed scholars is not whether this is an actual city, as the cover stories in the international press argue is the point of debate, but just what civilization the ruins represent.

1. Unorthodox scholars and those of a fringe bent have long studied the origins of the land of Wa—the old name for Japan appearing in the first historical records of Chinese Han Dynasty texts (25–225 C.E.). They hold that Wa was the only visible remnant of a much more ancient civilization, conjectured to be Mu, whose Golden Age is dated as being as much as 150,000 years ago.

AERIAL VIEW OF THE KOFUN MOUND

The inner chamber remained untouched, blocked by a hermetically sealed granite slab. Ground sonar indicated the mummified remains of a person of high station such as an empress or shamaness, covered in exquisite jade jewelry.

Some political camps in the government have delayed the opening of the inner chamber, fearing that the artifacts prove once and for all that the Japanese people are in fact descendants of Korean settlers on the Japanese islands. Considering the centuries of conflict with Korea, such a revelation would be a major blow to Japan's national pride.

A smaller series of three kofun mounds has been found on the Kuril Islands just above Hokkaido. The problem in excavating these sites is that these islands have belonged to Russia since WWII. All efforts to examine these sites have been blocked by the Russian government, on one occasion with deadly force. The islands are peopled by workers in a poor and struggling fishing industry who seem to have no interest in the kofun site except to deny Japanese researchers access to it.

Noteworthy Artifacts/Tomes

Among the contents found in the outer chamber were the remains of Empress Pimiko and a version of the *Shintsu Taizen*, the *Ribén De Wängeln* which was stolen during shipment to the Hokkaido Museum of History.

Cryptozoology Department

Cryptozoology has developed as a small but persistent professional field in Japan, partly due to the fact that the effects of the nuclear fallout of the 1940s and 1950s have led to all sorts of mutations in normal animal life. Todai can claim a staff of five dedicated researchers in the field of cryptozoology. This includes three professors, one private interest, and a foreign Monbusho scholar. Department head, and also the most difficult person to find standing still in any one place, is Hideyoshi Okabe. This man of sixty has amazing vitality and never fails to get personally involved in any ongoing department project.

Facilities

Department facilities are not particularly noteworthy as researchers spend most of their time in the field.

Current Projects

Shimpiteki Shima

Recently seismologists recorded the birth of a new volcanic island in the 400-mile stretch of water between mainland Japan and Okinawa Prefecture. One fishing boat that investigated the newly formed island has returned with stories of two crewmates who, after entering a cave on the island, are now suffering from a horrible wasting paralysis.

Keepers, this may be the resurfaced island of the Great Old One, Gharanothoa.

Lake Akida and Ishii

The cryptozoology department is keeping Lake Akida under close scrutiny after several reports of recent activity by area residents. The local legend reports that the lake monster, nicknamed Ishii, is traditionally

The Lonely Traveler

Lake Monster or Merchandising Scam?

By Liz Tully

One of the best known mysteries (and most hotly debated cases by experts in the field of cryptozoology) is the unsolved puzzle of the creature called Ishii, which supposedly dwells in Lake Akida. Spotted frequently over the last ten years, it has created a local tourist industry complete with cute stuffed dolls of the alleged creature. Armchair theorists believe it is the same species as the Loch Ness monster, affectionately called Nessie. Witnesses report Ishii sporting a tail, two humps, and a long neck like its cousin in Scotland. With an extinct crater lake over five hundred fathoms deep to hide in, the creature, or possibly a whole colony of creatures, has plenty of room to roam. Speculations by debunkers suggest that Ishii is "merely" a hundred-foot-long eel—a proposition which leaves Ishii believers wondering if the debunkers have been drinking too much of the locally brewed sake.

Older local residents insist that Ishii is only a smaller inhabitant of the lake. The creature has been surfacing so much in recent years because something much larger has been stirring up the murky bottom of the foreboding lake. The writer of the original 1950s monster movie *Gadzella* reportedly stayed at a summer cottage on Lake Akida in his youth. One has to wonder where he got his ideas: did he see Ishii or something else much larger, something only rarely seen or spoken of?

A Race of the Gods?

By Akira Shinobu

Most Japanese feel that their race is inherently of divine lineage. Popular myth declares that the Japanese race is descended from the Sun Goddess Amaterasu who also begot the line of emperors who in turn have kept the imperial lineage pure down the centuries. The moniker "land of the rising sun" for Japan, also apparent in the design of the national flag, derives from this divine ancestor, the sun goddess Amaterasu.

Some unconventional scholars propose that these inborn beliefs of divinity are a racial memory and may indeed hold some truth, but that eons of retelling have masked origins molded by star-beings.

Dr. Alan Quatermass, a longtime resident in Japan and scholar of Shintoism, cites various examples of possible non-terrestrial influence in the native religion: the ubiquitous use of snake symbolism in the native Shinto religion of Japan; the long-time veneration of dragons—a universal phenomenon in Asia; the ancient Jomôn Era (10,000 B.C.E.) *dogu* clay figurines featuring insectoid eyes and space-suit-like clothing; and *kofun*, the massive key-shaped tombs of the first emperors. All these clues point to Japan being the heir to an ancient, possibly non-human civilization. Dr. Quatermass believes much of the current evidence supports the notion of co-existence with, or a servitor capacity to, a non-terrestrial race of beings with snake-like characteristics in Japan's ancient past. Also suspect, and supportive of the theory of a past affinity with a non-human race, is the strange predilection for fish and cephalopods (squid and octopi) by Japanese natives.

thought to be the same species as famed Nessie from Loch Ness in Scotland. Japanese researchers aren't so sure about this assessment: a routine sonar scan of the lake bed unexpectedly returned the strange image of a massive creature of bizarre proportions.

WHAT'S IN THE LAKE

At the keeper's option, Ishii can be one or more Ilsigor at the bottom of Lake Akida who occasionally materialize as a giant sea reptile.

Another possibility is that Ishii is an active wata-tsumi *tatsu*, a Japanese water dragon. An unknown twin of the Great Old One Glaaki may inhabit the lake.

Finally, for keepers with a sense of humor, it may well be a famous movie monster in the flesh, so to speak. If choosing the last option for the mysterious creature in the waters of Lake Akida, please refer to the Gamra monster entry on page 258. ☯

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INTERNET SITES

Note: Internet sites are unstable, and these listings may become invalid over time.

http://www.jinja.or.jp/english/s-0.html
Here is a site that gives a very clear breakdown of Shinto faith, perhaps better than could be provided in the limited space of the book.

http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~EB3Y-KKTK/omikuji/omikuji.html
A cyber shrine with omikuji fortunes (papers tied to the tree branches).

http://www.pantheon.org/mythica/
An excellent and comprehensive site about mythology in general, including Japanese mythology.

http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/ANCJAPAN/CONTENTS.HTM

http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/FEUJAPAN/CONTENTS.HTM

http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/TOKJAPAN/CONTENTS.HTM

http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_1/kojiki.html
Washington State University web sites about Japan.

http://lloyd.quasisemi.com/myth/

http://lloyd.quasisemi.com/myth/shinto.htm/

http://www.gods-heros-myth.com/
Another general mythology site.

http://www.sacred-texts.com/shi/kojiki.htm
A web site about the real-life *Kojiki*.

Present

Investigator Name _____
Occupation _____
Universities, Degrees _____
Birthplace _____
Mental Disorders _____
Sex _____ Age _____

Characteristics & Rolls

STR ____	DEX ____	INT ____	Idea ____
CON ____	APP ____	POW ____	Luck ____
SIZ ____	SAN ____	EDU ____	Know ____

99-Cthulhu Mythos ____ Damage Bonus ____

Japanese Investigator's Sheet

Player's Name _____

Cthulhu Japan

Horror Role-Playing

Sanity Points

Insane	**0**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

Magic Points

Unconscious	**0**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
39	40	41	42	43					

Hit Points

Dead	**-2**	**-1**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42	43			

Investigator Skills

- ☐ Accounting (10%) ____
- ☐ Anthropology (01%) ____
- ☐ Archaeology (01%) ____
- Art (05%):
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ Astronomy (01%) ____
- ☐ Bargain (05%) ____
- ☐ Biology (01%) ____
- ☐ Bushidō (10%) ____
- ☐ Channel Spirit (05%) ____
- ☐ Chemistry (01%) ____
- ☐ Climb (40%) ____
- ☐ Computer Use (01%) ____
- ☐ Conceal (15%) ____
- ☐ Corp. Culture (15%) ____
- Craft (05%):
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ Credit Rating (15%) ____
- ☐ Cthulhu Mythos (00%) ____
- ☐ Cultr. Etiquette (15%) ____
- ☐ Disguise (01%) ____
- ☐ Dodge (DEX x2) ____
- ☐ Drive Auto/Bike (20%) ____
- ☐ Electr. Repair (10%) ____
- ☐ Electronics (01%) ____
- ☐ Fast Talk (05%) ____
- ☐ First Aid (30%) ____
- ☐ Geology (01%) ____
- ☐ Hide (10%) ____
- ☐ History (20%) ____
- ☐ Jump (25%) ____
- ☐ Law (05%) ____
- ☐ Library Use (25%) ____
- ☐ Listen (25%) ____
- ☐ Locksmith (01%) ____
- Lore (10%): ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- Martial Arts (15%):
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ Mech. Repair (20%) ____
- ☐ Medicine (05%) ____
- ☐ Meditation (05%) ____
- ☐ Natural History (10%) ____
- ☐ Navigate (10%) ____
- ☐ Occult (05%) ____
- ☐ O-Keiko (05%) ____
- ☐ Opr. Hvy. Mch. (01%) ____
- Other Language (01%):
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- Own Language (EDU x4%):
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ Persuade (15%) ____
- ☐ Pharmacy (01%) ____
- ☐ Photography (10%) ____
- ☐ Physics (01%) ____
- Pilot (01%):
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ Psychoanalysis (01%) ____
- ☐ Psychology (05%) ____
- ☐ Ride (05%) ____
- ☐ Shōdō (05%) ____
- ☐ Shukō-Gei (05%) ____
- ☐ Sneak (10%) ____
- ☐ Spot Hidden (25%) ____
- ☐ Swim (25%) ____
- ☐ Throw (25%) ____
- ☐ Track (10%) ____
- ☐ Urban Navigat. (10%) ____
- Zoku (05%/20%): ____
- ☐ _____ ____
- ☐ _____ ____

Firearms

- ☐ Handgun (20%) ____
- ☐ Rifle (25%) ____
- ☐ Shotgun (30%) ____

Weapons

melee	%	*damage*	*hnd*	*rng*	*#att*	*hp*
☐ Fist (50%)	___	1D3+db	1	touch	1	n/a
☐ Grapple (25%)	___	special	2	touch	1	n/a
☐ Head (10%)	___	1D4+db	0	touch	1	n/a
☐ Kick (25%)	___	1D6+db	0	touch	1	n/a
☐ _____	___	_____	___	___	___	___
☐ _____	___	_____	___	___	___	___

	weapon	%	*damage*	*malf*	*rng*	*#att*	*shots*	*hp*
☐	_____	___	_____	___	___	___	___	___
☐	_____	___	_____	___	___	___	___	___
☐	_____	___	_____	___	___	___	___	___
☐	_____	___	_____	___	___	___	___	___
☐	_____	___	_____	___	___	___	___	___
☐	_____	___	_____	___	___	___	___	___

Personal Data

Family Name _____
Personal Name _____
Residence _____
Japanese Prefecture _____
City/Village _____
Personal Description _____
_____
_____
Family Relations & Origins _____
_____
_____
Employer _____
Work Uniform _____

Current Legal Problems _____
_____
Cultural Problems _____
Culture Shock (CS) Level _____
CS Side Effects _____
_____
Episodes of Insanity _____
_____
_____
Wounds & Injuries _____
_____
Marks & Scars _____
_____

Investigator History

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Income & Savings

Income (100 yen=$1) _____
Cash on Hand _____
Savings _____
Personal Property _____
_____
_____
Real Estate _____
_____

Adventuring Gear & Possessions

_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

Mythos Tomes Read

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Magical Artifacts / Spells Known

Artifacts _____ Spells _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Entities Encountered

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
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_____ _____
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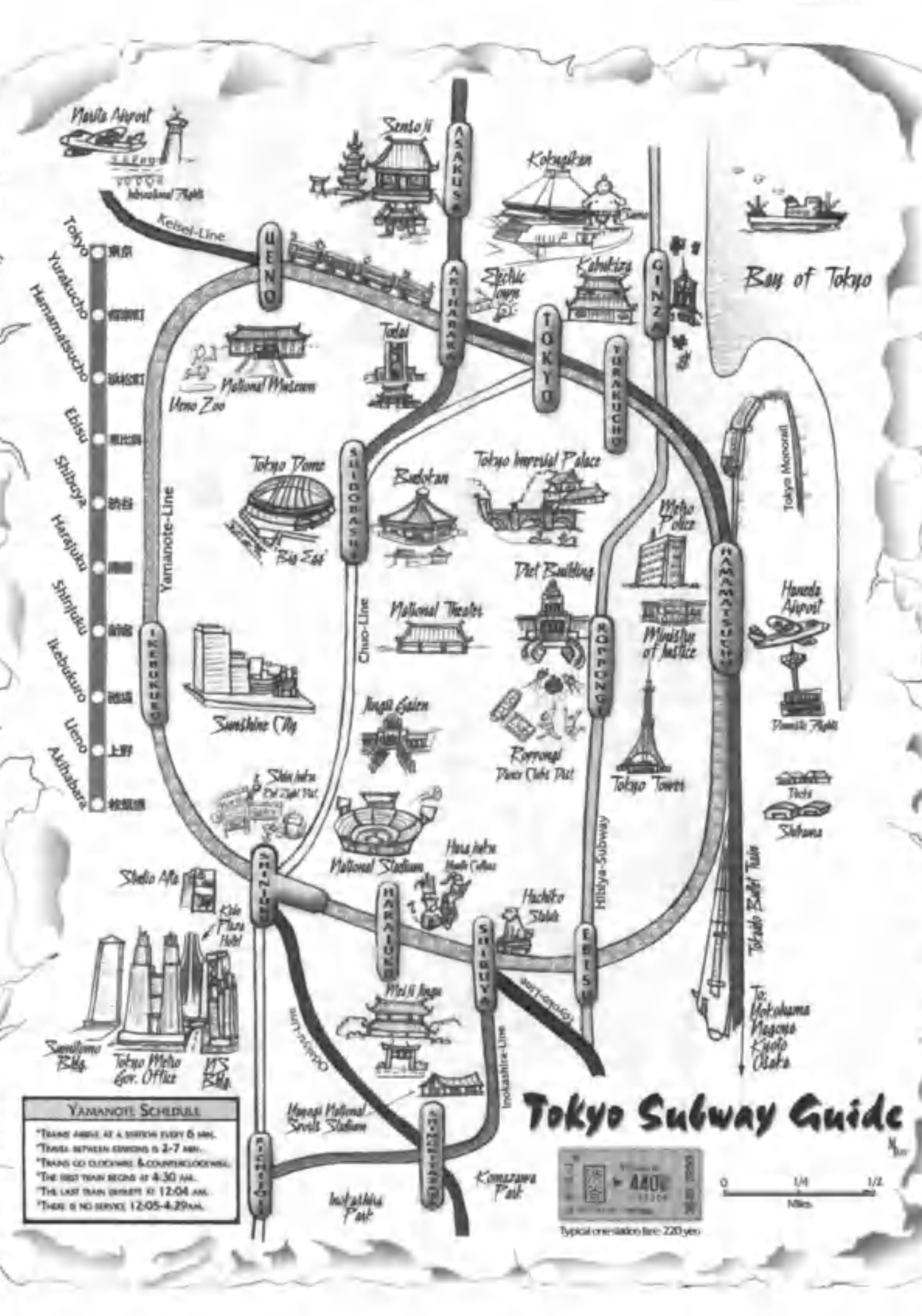
_____ _____
_____ _____

Supernatural map of Japan–photocopy and use to mark yôkai outbreaks.



Tokyo Subway Guide

Yamanote Schedule

- Trains arrive at a station every 6 min.
- Travel between stations is 2-7 min.
- Trains go clockwise & counterclockwise.
- The first train begins at 4:30 a.m.
- The last train departs at 12:04 a.m.
- There is no service 12:05-4:29 a.m.

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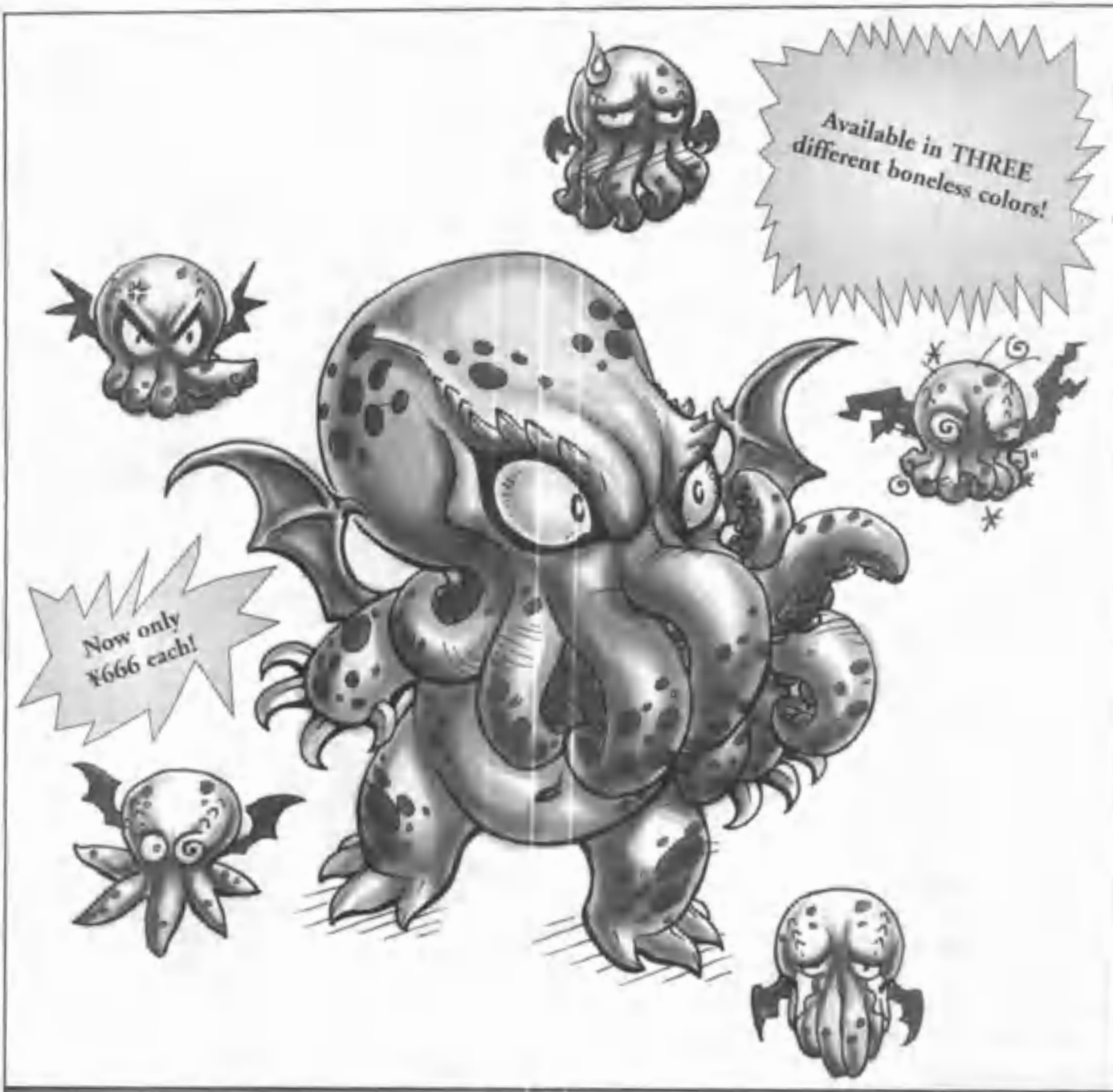

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About the Author

Michael Dzienisnki earned a Bachelor of Sociology in Japan Studies at Florida State University and managed to also attend a Temple University exchange program in Tokyo for a time. After graduation, he was admitted into the Japanese Ministry of Education's Japan Exchange Teaching Program. During his three years in JET, he taught English as a second language at Japanese public schools while living in the rural countryside of Shikoku Island's Ehime Prefecture, a place where numerous folk tales and ghost stories abound. Currently, he is attending the University of Hawaii, working on a Masters of Arts in Asian Studies focused on Japan. In the future, he hopes to continue onward to a PhD in Sociology as well as to write further adventures and novels on the dark corners of Japan.

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